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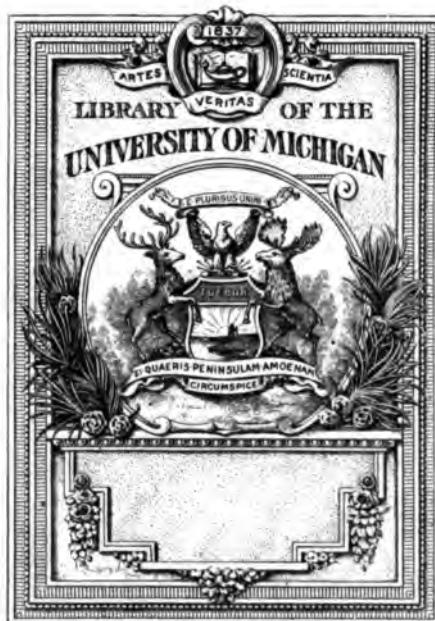
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**RECOLLECTIONS OF A
DIPLOMATIST**

RECOLLECTIONS OF A DIPLOMATIST

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BY THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
SIR HORACE RUMBOLD, BART., G.C.B., G.C.M.G.
SOMETIME H.M. AMBASSADOR AT VIENNA

SECOND IMPRESSION

VOL. II

LONDON
EDWARD ARNOLD
Publisher to the India Office
1902

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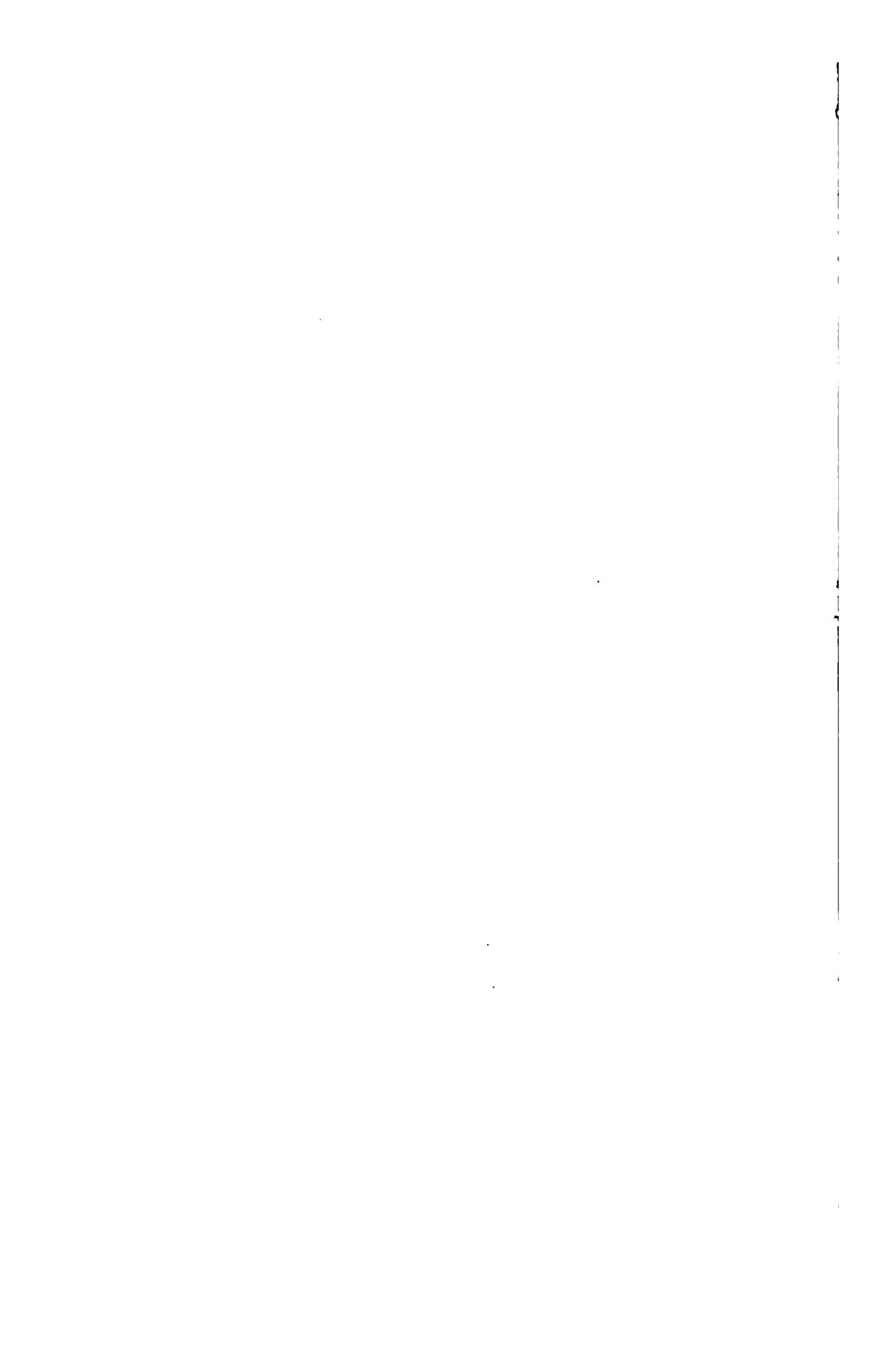
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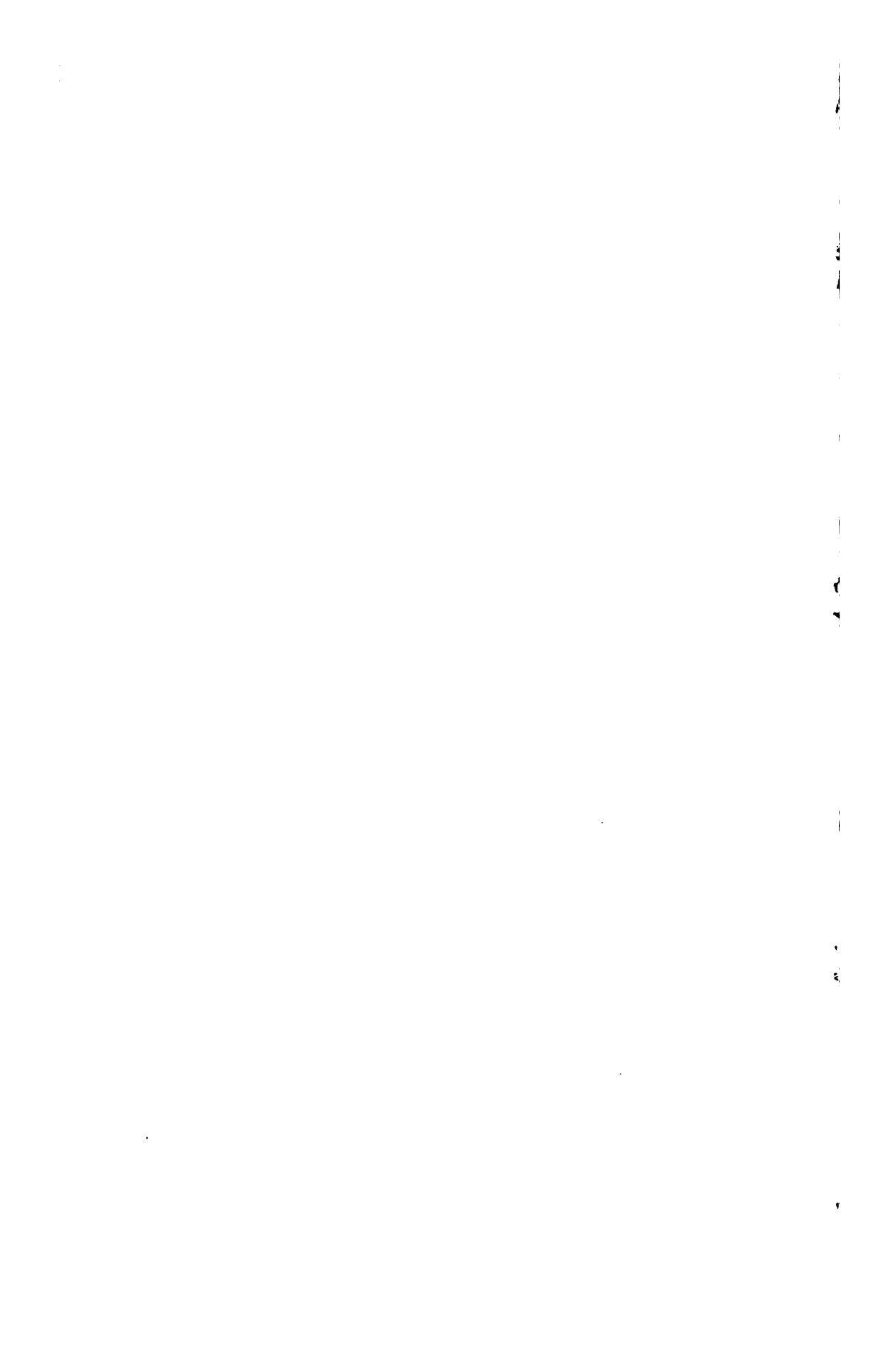
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ERRATA

VOL. II.

Page 18, line 9, for 'wrriten' read 'written.'
,, 30, „ 22, for 'Sangkolinsin' read 'San-ko-lin-sin.'
,, 40, „ 16, for 'Captain' read 'Captains.'
,, 100, „ 1, for 'land'" read 'land.'
,, 103, „ 23, for 'colouring' read 'colouring,'
,, 121, „ 30, for 'Afterward' read '1 Afterwards.'
,, 123, „ 1, for 'delicate tracery of their shade' read
 'shade of their meagre foliage.'
,, 153, „ 27, for 'whom I shall ever look back upon' read
 'to whom I shall ever look back.'
,, 170, „ 29, for 'not out of it' read 'not of it.'
,, 217, „ 19, for 'party her and partly' read 'her influence
 together with.'
,, 225, „ 9, for 'mois' read 'mois,'¹ and insert footnote,
 ¹ The attempt of Berezowski on the
 life of the Emperor Alexander at Paris.
,, 241, „ 4, for 'Limenticarlo' read 'dimenticarlo.'
,, 254, „ 2, for 'vodky' read 'vodka.'
,, 276, „ 23, for 'vodky' read 'vodka.'



RECOLLECTIONS OF A DIPLOMATIST

CHAPTER XIV

THE MISSION TO CHINA IN 1859

MARCH soon came round, and, with it, the time appointed for our departure for the East. On the 11th we left Paris by the morning express to Marseilles. Mr. Bruce, Alexander Bower St. Clair (second Paid Attaché to the Legation), and Hugh Wyndham¹ (Unpaid Attaché), then still quite a youth, made up our party, and we also had with us "Punch" Vyse, whom Lord Malmesbury had just transformed from a captain in the Blues into a Vice-Consul in Japan. Admiral Sir James Hope, who was going out to take command of the China station, also travelled with us from Paris with his flag-captain, Willes, and the rest of his staff. The superstitious might have noted that our commencing the journey on a Friday was ominous of the ill-success that was to attend our expedition. Early on the 12th we were on board the *Ellora P.* and *O.* steamer, and on our

¹ Sir George Hugh Wyndham, K.C.M.G., C.B., late Minister at Bucharest.

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way to Alexandria. Lovely weather we had, the dreaded Golfe du Lion treating us exceptionally well for the time of year, and we had hardly shaken down in our berths before we found ourselves off Malta on the evening of the 14th. It was late when we landed here, and Valetta, with its marvellously picturesque bastions and ancient buildings, and its staircase-lanes and streets, looked its best in the broad moonlight. We spent the greater part of the night chaffering at Jew stalls for local rubbish, supping with hospitable officers at one of the Alberghi, and rowing round the line-of-battle ships that lay slumbering in the Great Harbour, casting the inky shadows of their giant hulls and all the delicate tracery of their spars and rigging on the rippling silver about them. With daybreak we were once more on our way, three days of roughish weather bringing us to Alexandria on the morning of the 18th.

Of the well-beaten track we were now following, I will only say that it stands out in my memory as a fragment of some gorgeous dream, so splendid in colouring and so unreal appeared the world into which I was now ushered. Those alone who tread the soil of the East for the first time can form any conception of my impressions. The railway from Alexandria to Cairo and Suez has, of course, deprived the passage through Egypt of most of its Oriental glamour. Yet, even set in the commonplace frame of a railway-carriage window, the

changing views of the most mysterious of rivers, the Arab villages nestling in clumps of date-trees, the strings of camels in single file sharply cut out against a background of crudest blue and ochre—blazing sky above and sun-baked sand below—made up a succession of pictures not to be forgotten. Ineffaceable, too, is the recollection of our drive up to the Citadel just about sunset; when the beautiful Mosque of Mehemet Ali was being lighted up with myriads of coloured lamps in honour of some high festival; when the faithful came flocking up in every variety of Eastern garb; and, down below, the fairy city and the boundless tawny plain that girdles it were darkening fast as night sped onwards from the land of Goshen and the wilderness of Sinai.

Our party was now completed by De Normann, our first Paid Attaché, who had come round by the direct steamer from Southampton, and who, poor fellow! was to meet, a brief eighteen months later, with so tragical a fate. A morning at the Pyramids and an afternoon in the Bazaar completed our experiences of Cairo, and the next day at noon we were struggling units in the strange motley mass of humanity that crowded the decks of the Calcutta-bound steamer. The *Simla* was a large vessel of famous speed in those days, and we favoured ones were well berthed on board of her, but from the torments of thirst we underwent in her from Suez to Point de Galle may my worst enemy be preserved!

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By some gross neglect the supply of ice had not been renewed at Calcutta on her last trip, so that, all down the suffocating Red Sea, and across the sweltering stretch of the Indian Ocean, every drop of liquid we imbibed was nauseously tepid. We touched, of course, at Aden—where I got half a sunstroke—and, in the small hours of April 6, anchored in the roadstead of Point de Galle.

I rubbed my eyes—doubtless roused by the clatter of boatmen's tongues—and, looking through the cabin port, experienced a singular sensation. In front of me lay a long, low line of land, clothed and crested with foliage of a luxuriance to which my eye was perfectly unaccustomed. The buildings on the shore were new to me in shape and aspect; so were the trees—most conspicuous amongst them the feathery cocoa-palm; so were the strange outrigger canoes plying to and fro on the glittering water; so were the semi-nude, dusky, womanish creatures who clustered round the ship in their boats, grinning and chattering; so were the fruits and wares that filled their baskets—mangoes and bananas and mangosteens, trifles made of porcupine quills and plaited straw and ivory and ebony; so was, in short, each distinctively tropical feature in this most tropical of scenes. Yet, as I scanned the prospect and took it all in, it seemed to me familiar even in its details; I felt somehow that I knew it all. Not in the ordinary way in which we recognise objects once seen and then forgotten; but with that sudden, vivid sense

of remembrance with which a new place we come to, or a word said or heard, the accidental grouping of persons, the slightest action, the mere turn of a sentence, flashes upon us as belonging to some former period of existence. Most persons have experienced the strange sensation without perhaps pondering over its mysteries. Of course, in the present case, the explanation was not far to seek. The first four years of my life had been passed in India amidst similar surroundings, and although I had lost all recollection of the scenes on which my infant eyes had gazed unconsciously, no doubt the memories which for five-and-twenty years had slumbered in some corner of my brain were now suddenly evoked by the sight before me.

Ceylon was a place of no ordinary interest to me, for here I owned a few acres of land which I had never as yet visited. Mr. Bruce kindly suggested that I should remain in the island till the departure of the following China steamer a fortnight later, and as St. Clair was still suffering from a sharp attack of dysentery which had developed in the Red Sea, it was further arranged that he too should stay here for the same period to recover; *carte blanche* being given me to bring him on with me or not as I thought most advisable. At Galle we found H.M.S. *Furious* waiting for us with Lord Elgin on board of her. To one of his staff, Laurence Oliphant, we brought the sad tidings of his father's death. The Envoy brothers passed a day in consultation over the affairs of the

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Empire which the one had just left and to which the other was bound, and next morning departed on their several ways—Lord Elgin for Suez and home, and Mr. Bruce, with De Normann and Wyndham, for Singapore, where the *Magicienne*, steam frigate, Captain Nicholas Vansittart, was waiting to take the Mission on to Hong-Kong. As for me, I left St. Clair installed, and well looked after, at the Queen's House at Galle, and, accompanied by my faithful Italian valet, Perrini, took coach up country.

Next to Java, Ceylon is reputed the most picturesque and luxuriant of tropical islands. The old road from Galle to Colombo, and from Colombo to Kandy, certainly abounds in beautiful prospects, the European eye being at first quite dazzled by the richness of colouring and lavish wealth of the vegetation. In those days, too, the journey afforded all the charms of coaching, with a spice of risk to one's bones into the bargain which must have contented the most *blasé* of travellers. So vicious and ill-broken were the horses, that at most of the post-stations it took at least five minutes to start them, after which they were almost beyond control for the rest of the stage. One of these wretched, plunging, jibbing brutes—doubtless maddened by a long course of ill-usage at the hands of mongrel Portuguese drivers—jumped clean over the wooden parapet of a bridge we were crossing, and, remaining suspended by his collar, was only saved from strangulation by everything being

cut away, and his being allowed to drop into the shallow stream below. Another deliberately ran at a tree by the roadside and upset the coach with all its contents into the ditch below. We were none of us hurt, and fortunately the vehicle was very light—a kind of open break, or *char à banc*, with a roof to it—for we had to raise it ourselves, not one of the lazy Cinghalese who crowded round us vouchsafing to lend a hand. At Colombo I was the guest of Messrs. Wilson & Ritchie, and at Kandy of Mr. Simon Keir, of the house of Keir, Dundas & Co., estate agents, who had the general superintendence of the property I had come to visit. Ceylon is essentially a Scotch colony, and, beneath its glowing skies, the hospitality dispensed by the shrewd, hard-working merchants and planters attains proportions unknown even in the land of cakes.

It is but a few hours' drive from Kandy to Pusilava, in which then most favoured of coffee-growing districts lay the Melfort Estate in which I was interested. Pusilava lies a few miles above Kandy in a hilly range rising to 1500 or 2000 feet, the lower slopes of which, at the time I speak of, were covered by a succession of coffee plantations, since entirely destroyed by the fatal leaf disease. The effect of great masses of the beautiful shrub, covered just then with blossom of snowy white, and overshadowed by splendid clumps of tropical forest trees, with the white buildings and stores belonging to the different estates dotted about here and there, was

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quite enchanting, while the trimly-kept roads and the various signs of careful husbandry made a most pleasing contrast with the grand, luxuriant scenery in which they were set. A quaint, middle-aged individual, of the name of Martin (a Scotchman, of course), was then the resident manager of Melfort, and lived there in a tumble-down bungalow which offered so little accommodation that I had to seek quarters in the comfortable house on the adjoining Delta estate belonging to one of my relatives. After spending two or three days at Delta, which I employed in riding over the different adjoining estates, I went up the magnificent Rambodde pass to Nuwera Ellia, where I called on Sir Henry Ward, at that time Governor of the island. On April 21 I was back again at Galle, the following day being appointed for the departure of the China mail steamer.

I had left my pet bull-terrier, Ben, in the charge of St. Clair, and, on entering the Queen's House, on the morning of my return from Colombo, the first thing I espied was the poor beast tied to the leg of a table, his head enveloped in a canvas bag, with convenient holes for the eyes, and his hind-quarters and delicately tapering tail symmetrically marked by a row of ghastly, and scarcely healed, scars or abrasions. His spirits, for that matter, were as carnival-esque as his masquerading disguise, and his joyful yelpings at sight of me showed him to be in thorough good case. Lost in amazement at his appearance,

which I at first supposed must be the result of a severe encounter with some of his own species, I sought an explanation from the Cinghalese servants, but from all their gibberish could only make out the words "De fiss!" I sallied forth in quest of St. Clair, whom I found engaged at billiards with some of the officers of the Ceylon Rifles. As soon as he saw me he exclaimed: "Have you seen the dog? I *am* so sorry!" His story, which I give as he related it, was that the valorous Ben had followed him, on the day of my departure, to a shallow creek near the lighthouse, entirely enclosed by rocks, which was accounted the only safe bathing-place at Galle. There the dog had gone into the water after sticks and stones (he had a perfect passion for diving, unusual in dogs of his breed, of which he was later on to give still more signal proof), and, just as he was landing on a ledge of rock, and still half immersed, had given a howl, plunged again beneath the surface, and, after what seemed a sharp tussle, reappeared streaming with blood. As we were talking over the incident, some natives came on the scene with a small shark, which, after patient angling for a fortnight, they had caught on the very spot. It was difficult not to believe that this was the offender. The shark had evidently nipped, or rather scraped, Ben with his teeth just as he was getting out of the water, but not getting a good purchase of him, had been made to relinquish his hold, the biter, in fact, in this case, having been probably himself severely

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bitten. Few dogs, I imagine, have gone through such peril and lived to wag their tails over it.

The *Pekin*, an old paddle-wheel steamer of 1000 tons, commanded by an officer of the name of Burne, took us on to Penang, Singapore, and Hong-Kong. On board of her we found Mr. Ward, the newly appointed United States Envoy to China, and his brother. I struck up a great friendship with these Americans, who were excellent specimens of the Southern gentry. Mr. Ward was a Georgian, and had been Mayor of Savannah. He made no secret to me of the view he took of his mission. "I am going to Peking like yourselves to ratify a Treaty," he said, "but well know I shall never get there except under cover of your guns." This accurate forecast of the trouble that awaited us forcibly recurred to me afterwards. When we reached Hong-Kong on May 9, in oppressively hot weather, we found that our chief was away at Canton in the *Magicienne*. I was welcomed on landing by Wade—afterwards Minister at Peking and at that time Chinese Secretary to our Mission—the most eminent perhaps of living Sinologues,¹ and at the same time a man of the most varied accomplishments—whose friendship and delightful companionship were invaluable to me throughout our cruise.

The first impressions produced by China are, of course, those of absolute novelty and unbounded

¹ Sir Thomas Wade, long since gathered to the majority, was beloved by all who knew him.

amazement, but, as far as goes my very limited experience of a country of which I, so to speak, only touched the fringe, these feelings, however keen, were soon blunted, and made room for a sense of unutterable weariness. To my European eyes all Chinamen appeared exactly alike (possibly a Chinaman might think the same of Europeans), and the thought that there existed some three hundred and fifty millions of these intensely conceited beings, all cast in the self-same mould, and that they constituted a full fifth of mankind, acted upon me like a nightmare and induced profound dejection. Nevertheless, the coming into contact with these extraordinary creatures, the first sight of their dwellings and dress, their shops and junks, of their gimcrack ornaments and tawdry art, and the sense of actually living in a willow-plate pattern world, must be reckoned among the most curious experiences that can be derived from travel.

Hong-Kong, too, in itself, presents a most striking and, indeed, imposing appearance. The magnificent harbour, the handsome European buildings rising tier above tier up the almost precipitous sides of the mountain—how those slender, small-boned Coolie chairmen contrive to carry corpulent British majors or brawny corporals up and down them at a dog-trot, with such ease, quite passes one's comprehension—the crowd of shipping and strange-looking native craft; the painted eaves, pagoda roofs, and fantastic sign-boards of the native town; the bustle

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of the quays; the juxtaposition of Chinese decay, slovenliness, and filth, with English order and trimness; the very odours of the place—a vile compound of the incense of burnt joss-stick, lacquer varnish, tainted fish, and other nameless abominations—combine to make it the most original as well as the most pestilential spot in that chain of possessions with which England girdles the world. I engaged a room at the very comfortable club-house, pending the return of the *Magicienne*, and fraternised with the 1st Battalion of Royals (Colonel Haythorne), who had made us honorary members of their mess. Altogether we were “in clover” in China. Nothing could exceed the hospitality of the merchant princes of those days; and to us of the Legation they were lavish in their attentions. Jardine & Co. and Dent & Co. kept house, both at Hong-Kong and at Shanghai, on the grandest scale imaginable, and of Jardine’s it was said that they spent £40,000 a year in entertaining alone. It is sad to reflect on the ruin that has since overtaken some of the China houses.

The *Magicienne* presently came back from Canton, and I installed myself on board of her, excellent quarters having been prepared for us on her main-deck. My cabin had a large port, whence the gun had been removed, where I sat courting cool breezes that never came, and whiled away the tediousness of ship-life in reading the wonderful Jesuit accounts of the reigns of the Emperors Tschun-tche and

Kang-Hi, and otherwise "getting up" China. We remained three weeks at Hong-Kong, where a great deal of business connected with the superintendency of trade had to be settled before we could take up our residence—even temporarily—in the far North. At the risk of a tedious digression, I must endeavour here to show how great was the change to be created in our dealings with China by this removal, and what momentous consequences it involved.

The right of residence at Peking—or, at any rate, the right of access to that jealously guarded capital—was the cardinal point of the policy which Lord Elgin had the year before brought to a successful issue at Tien-tsin. The other conditions of the Treaty of June 26, 1858, such as the opening up of the Yangtse-Kiang, and even the right of free circulation in the provinces—however important—could not for a moment compare with this concession, wrung from the Imperial Court in a moment of dire distress and prostration. But the permanent residence at Peking of a duly accredited Minister of her Majesty implied yet more unpalatable conditions. That Minister would have to be received in solemn audience by the Emperor, and would there deliver his credentials without any of the degrading formalities hitherto invariably exacted from every person, of whatever degree, admitted to the Imperial presence. The Chinese, as is well known, claim universal dominion for their sovereign; hence the value attached by them to a ceremonial emble-

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matic of the homage which the whole universe owes to the Son of Heaven. Practically these absurd pretensions had debarred us from direct intercourse with the Emperor and his Government, and had left us to deal with insolent and irresponsible provincial magnates, such as the notorious Yeh—a fruitful source of trouble of which the “Arrow” lorcha case had been the culminating instance. These and similar considerations made the right of residence at the capital the fundamental point of our policy, as I have said; for by its assertion alone could we symbolise, and bring home to every Chinaman from the Emperor downwards, our equality with the Chinese as a nation, and our denial of their ridiculous pretensions to supremacy.

Unfortunately, we had too long given them reason to believe that, in the end, we might not insist on the most hateful clauses of the Treaty, and, leaving them a dead letter, might content ourselves with such advantages as we had obtained for our trade. “Throughout many generations of our intercourse with China,” wrote Mr. Bruce to Lord Malmesbury at this time, “we postponed considerations of national dignity to our commercial interests, and the statement that ‘the barbarians care for nothing but trade’ appears again and again in their official papers as the key to our character and the principle by acting on which we are to be soothed and controlled.” Even Lord Elgin himself, vigorous and determined though his policy had been, cannot

wholly escape the reproach of keeping alive this belief in the Chinese mind, for, in his last negotiations with the Imperial Commissioners at Shanghai, he had been induced to surrender the point of *permanent* residence at Peking in exchange for their sanction to a voyage which he was desirous to make up the Yangtse-Kiang River. We were soon to learn what use these same Commissioners would make of this deviation from a line of rigid enforcement of the Treaty.

Such being the condition of affairs on the arrival in China of our Mission, it was not hard to foresee that serious difficulties were in store for it. Mr. Bruce was fortunately authorised in his instructions to take with him, on his journey north, a force sufficient to deter the Imperial Court from actively opposing his progress to Peking. The French and American Ministers were going on the same errand as ourselves—namely, the exchange of ratifications of Treaties concluded at Tien-tsin the previous year on the model of our own. M. de Bourboulon and his staff were to be conveyed north in the corvette *Le Duchayla*, Captain Tricault; Mr. Ward going in the *Powhattan*, frigate, which carried the flag of Commodore Tatnall.

By June 2 our arrangements at Hong-Kong were completed, and we weighed anchor for Shanghai in company with the *Duchayla*. Early on the 6th we were off the Saddle Islands at the mouth of the Yangtse, and the turbid waters soon showed that we

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had entered that giant of rivers. In strange contrast to the intense heat we had suffered from in the south, we found here cloudy skies and drizzling rain. I put on clothing I had not worn since Suez, and felt as though we might be off the Nore instead of in the estuary of "the girdle of China." In the afternoon we passed Woosung, and were steaming slowly up the intricate channel of the river of that name, against a current of four knots, carefully sounding as we went, when suddenly a cry was raised of "dog overboard!" (Ben of course). I happened to be standing on the bridge at the time, with Mr. Bruce and Vansittart, peering through the mist for the first glimpse of Shanghai, and, rushing to the side, saw my friend, already long astern of us—a white speck on the yellow tide—but striking out undauntedly. Fortunately we had a few minutes before passed a sailing-vessel (the *Diana* of Greenock), beating up stream with a boat in tow. Ben steered straight for her, and, before the captain's orders to stop and lower a gig could be carried out, we could see the adventurous animal safely taken on board. He had been watching the leadsmen on the paddle-box, and could not resist the temptation of going in after the lead. Next morning the *Diana* anchored in Shanghai harbour, and Master Ben was fetched away in triumph from her by a boat's crew under the orders of young Anstruther, our captain's nephew. Both this and his shark adventure are so remarkable in their way that I would not venture

to put them down had I not credible witnesses to the veracity of my statements.

The force that was to escort us to the north had rendezvoused at Shanghai under the orders of Admiral Hope. It consisted of some twenty vessels, two of which were transports carrying a strong battalion of marines and a couple of companies of engineers. The day after our arrival, Mr. Bruce landed in state, all the boats of the squadron first forming an avenue through which he passed in the Admiral's barge, and then falling into procession after him ; while the ships, anchored in half-moon order, manned yards and fired an Envoy's salute of fifteen guns.¹ It was an imposing sight, I thought, and a proud display of the power of England at so great a distance from home. Unfortunately, the Chinese, on whom it was intended to produce a salutary impression, showed themselves provokingly indifferent to it. A few coolies loitered by the landing-place as we stepped out of the boat, but, in passing along the deserted *bund*, we could not help somehow being uncomfortably conscious that to the leery, imperturbable sons of Han, the whole ceremony was mere empty noise and smoke, such as the turbulent barbarians, in their ignorance, delight in.

¹ In due accordance with naval etiquette, our boat's crew stopped pulling and rested on their oars as soon as the salute began, Mr. Bruce uncovering at the same time. In my ignorance of such matters—I had never in my life heard a salute fired—I politely followed suit, but felt very small when my chief growled, in, for him, subdued tones : “D—n you ! Put your hat on ; it's not for you !”

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We took up our quarters at the Consulate, whence the Consul was unceremoniously dislodged, and were soon deep in correspondence with the Imperial Commissioners. These dignitaries were Kweiliang, Hwashana, Ho-Kwei-Tsing, and Twan-Ching-Shih—the two first the leading negotiators of the Tien-tsin Treaty. The very fact of our finding them at Shanghai was of ill-omen, for Mr. Bruce had written to Kweiliang from Hong-Kong on May 16, advising him of his intention to proceed to Peking for the purpose of delivering in person an autograph letter from his sovereign to the Emperor of China, and exchanging there, as by that Treaty provided, the ratifications of the Treaty of Tien-tsin, at which latter city he requested that everything might be in readiness for the fitting reception of himself and his suite, and their transmission to the capital. Three weeks alone divided us from June 26, on which day, at latest, the ratifications had to be exchanged, and yet the very officials, whose business it was to carry out that ceremony and attend to our reception, were still here, hundreds of miles from Peking, and evidently bent on retarding our visit north, if not hoping to make us give it up altogether.

The deliberate manner in which they opened up the correspondence left us in no doubt as to their intent. They wrote on May 27 that they had been waiting in the south since the previous autumn, on the strength of a promise from Lord Elgin that

he would return to Shanghai from Canton to discuss various important questions with them. They were now ready to discuss those questions with Mr. Bruce, and hoped he would meet them without loss of time, "as the period appointed for the exchange of the Treaties is very near at hand." On the 28th they wrote two more letters (Mr. Bruce found all three communications waiting for him at Shanghai), in which they began by acknowledging the receipt of the letter addressed to Kweiliang from Hong-Kong, and, entirely changing their tone as to the necessity of ratifying the Treaty within the specified period, dwelt upon the impossibility of their reaching Peking as early as Mr. Bruce proposed; indeed, "having to travel north by land," they could not be there under two months, if so soon. "The exchange of Treaties," they said, "was an affair of too grave importance to be hurried over." They then pointed out that nothing would be ready at Tien-tsin for Mr. Bruce's reception on his arrival there, and suggested that he should defer his departure from Shanghai for a while, rather than "be kept waiting at the other place (Tien-tsin) where after midsummer the heat is excessive." They requested Mr. Bruce, therefore, to name a day for a conference. Finally, in their third letter, after repeating that Lord Elgin's promise to return was the cause of their detention at Shanghai, they sketched out the points which had been disposed of by Lord Elgin before leaving China, and those

that remained to be discussed. It had been agreed with Lord Elgin, they said, that the visit to Peking "to exchange courtesies and treaties was exceptional," and there was to be no permanent residence there. The Emperor had been informed of this decision. Further, "Lord Elgin had been up the river to Han-Kow for once, but the navigation of the Yangtse-Kiang was henceforward to be in accordance with former Treaties." Again, as regarded the right of free circulation in the empire, they hinted at a system of passports, to be issued by the local authorities, which would have rendered the concession absolutely nugatory.

These letters caused Mr. Bruce no little anxiety, but did not for a moment make him swerve from the line of conduct he had determined upon. The experience he had derived from the mission of his brother authorised but one conclusion, namely, "that the Chinese Government will not stoop to entertain a proposition except under pressure of fear, that while the pressure endures there is no point which in words it will not concede, and that it will make good its words in exact proportion as the pressure is maintained or diminished."¹ Other motives combined to convince the British Envoy that by firmness and decision alone he could carry out the objects of his mission. Trustworthy reports had reached him of

¹ These words are quoted from an able letter by Mr. (afterwards Sir Thomas) Wade, printed at the time for private circulation. I have made ample use of it in this sketch of our negotiations, as also of the official correspondence of Mr. Bruce.

warlike preparations in the north, which his proceeding thither with the considerable force at his command was the only means of checking. Nor was it less essential that he should dispel the evil effects of Lord Elgin's waiving the point of permanent residence at Peking and accepting instead the offer of a journey up the Yangtse. That the Commissioners had been encouraged by this unfortunate concession was now proved by their hinting their readiness to settle at once the indemnity due to us under the Treaty for our losses at Canton, provided we would altogether abandon the visit to Peking. This overture showed once more how firmly rooted was their belief that we were always to be bribed by commercial or pecuniary advantages. Moved by all these considerations, Mr. Bruce resolved to cut short the attempts of the Commissioners by declining to discuss with them a Treaty which he had come to see executed and not discussed. Accordingly, he wrote to them on June 8 that he could not allow the period fixed for the exchange of the ratifications to be postponed. "His resolution to proceed to Peking without delay was," he told them, "inflexible"; he must therefore positively decline any interview with them at Shanghai; and he further warned them "that he was prepared to insist on a reception befitting the dignity of the nation he represented, and that any failure in this respect would be attended with the most serious consequences to the Imperial Government." Not

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receiving an immediate reply, he wrote again on the 11th, suggesting that the Commissioners, if their presence at Peking was, as they stated, necessary, might still keep their time by employing one of the Chinese steamers lying in Shanghai harbour to take them north ; he also gave them notice that Admiral Hope was proceeding with his squadron to the mouth of the Pei-ho to announce the approach of himself and the French Minister.

Thereupon came what was outwardly a complete and abject surrender. Mr. Bruce's letter of June 8, wrote the Commissioners on the 12th, had been forwarded by post and would reach Peking within nine days ; so that it might be assumed that, by the time Mr. Bruce and his French and American colleagues arrived at Tien-tsin, some high officer, whom the Commissioners had urged the Emperor to depute, would be there to receive and escort them to the capital, where the exchange of Treaties would be effected by the time fixed for that purpose. They (the Commissioners) dared not themselves go north by steamer without orders, but would hasten back post-haste by land "in obedience to the Emperor's commands." Mr. Bruce need feel no anxiety as to the intention of the Imperial Government to observe and carry out the Treaty, but they hoped that on his arrival at the mouth of the Tien-tsin River (the Pei-ho) his vessels might be anchored outside the bar, and that he would proceed to the capital without much luggage and with a moderate retinue.

“As he came speaking peace, his treatment by the Government of China could not fail to be in every way most courteous.”

Events soon showed that this conciliatory letter was a perfect specimen of Eastern duplicity. When writing it, the Commissioners, of course, well knew that at Peking it had been resolved to dispute our passage to Tien-tsin if necessary by force; yet they allowed no such intention to appear. It is, therefore, not unfair to assume that their instructions were to keep, if possible, the British Envoy negotiating at Shanghai, and, if he obdurately persisted in going north, on no account to warn him of any peril, but to let him run the risk of a collision without preparing him for it; thus reserving to the Imperial Government, if defeated in the attempt to keep us out of the river, the power to cast the blame of such collision on its local representatives. But, however satisfactory the language of the Commissioners might at first sight appear, their letter contained no allusion to the interview with the Emperor and the presentation of the letter of credence to him.

“I gather from this omission” (wrote Mr. Bruce to Lord Malmesbury on June 14) “that the Emperor has not instructed them on this material point, and as the question of ceremonial ought in my opinion to be settled before we leave Tien-tsin for Peking, it is clear that it could not have been discussed here, involving, as it does, the necessity of taking

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the pleasure of the Emperor upon it, without the risk of losing the season altogether for the visit to Peking. I must observe" (he added), "that in order to effect the presentation in person of credentials to the Emperor, and to deter the Chinese from their hitherto invariable practice of subjecting foreign Envoys to petty slights and insults which lower them and the Governments they represent in the eyes of the people, I must succeed in inspiring the Emperor and his counsellors with a conviction that what I have once demanded I will exact, and with a wholesome dread of my readiness and power to resort to force if my demands are not complied with."

Mr. Bruce, in fact, felt that this audience question was so odious and indeed abhorrent to the Chinese Court that even the minutest details connected with it must lead to a battle-royal, in which nothing but dire necessity would make that Court give way. The history of his brother's negotiations the year before had shown that Tien-tsin was the only point whence that Court could be coerced effectually. For that city, therefore, past experience, Lord Malmesbury's instructions, the paramount importance of the place as the key, so to speak, of the Imperial presence-chamber—and lastly the assurances of the Commissioners themselves—all combined to make the British Envoy shape his course.

CHAPTER XV

THE PEI-HO DISASTER

ON the morning of June 15, we once more went on board the *Magicienne*, and dropped down the river to Woosung, where we remained at anchor till the following morning, waiting for the Admiral's tender, the *Coromandel*, that was eventually to take us up the Pei-ho to Tien-tsin. We were all glad to leave Shanghai, where we had had a week of wretchedly wet weather, and to be fairly started for the Chinese capital. Early on the 16th we weighed anchor, with the *Coromandel* in tow, and the *Duchayla* in company with us. The *Powhattan*, with the American Minister, had preceded us on its way north a few days before. The weather continued damp and foggy, and the sea very rough, till the 19th, when it brightened again with a fresh wind, and a sparkle on the tumbling waves. On the forenoon of the 20th we were abreast of the island of Sha-lui-tien, some thirty miles from the mouth of the Pei-ho, where by agreement we were to meet the squadron that had preceded us.

Not a vessel was to be seen far and wide, so, still in company with the Frenchman, we shaped our course direct for the Pei-ho River. At 4 P.M. we

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steamed into the centre of our ships, which, together with the American frigate, lay at anchor some seven or eight miles from the Taku forts. A boat from the *Chesapeake* flag-ship at once came alongside, with a note from Admiral Hope to say that "he had found the forts" (destroyed by us the previous year) "rebuilt, and the river staked, but that he had been promised that the stakes would be removed by that evening." Presently the Admiral himself came on board with a full account of his proceedings. Having left Shanghai on the 11th, he had reached the rendezvous at Sha-lui-tien on the 16th, but, in consequence of stress of weather and bad anchorage, had found it necessary to proceed the next day to the Pei-ho. He had with him the *Fury* and two gun-boats, and after anchoring outside the bar, had at once, as agreed with Mr. Bruce, sent an officer on shore, with a competent interpreter, to announce the approach of the English and French Envoys, and to inquire what measures had been taken for their reception.

"These gentlemen found the river mouth barred, and all but closed, by a series of formidable booms and rafts; the works, demolished last year, rebuilt and extended; but, strange to say, no one to communicate with but some rudely armed peasants who maintained that there was no authority, civil or military, nearer than Tien-tsin; also that no authority had anything to say to the defences of which they were in charge; these were purely the affair of the people,

and devised by them for their protection against rebels and pirates."¹

Admiral Hope had then sent again to desire that the obstacles might be removed within three days, and had this time received an assurance that a passage would be cleared by that time. The authorities at Tien-tsin, he was likewise told, had been apprised of the arrival of the squadron, the whole of which had joined the flag on the 18th, and had anchored where we found them. The Admiral went on to tell us that he had just returned from the river, whither he had been to see for himself what had been done towards clearing a passage. He had crossed the bar in a gun-boat and had sent on shore a letter to the Tau-tai (Prefect) of Tien-tsin, requesting that "as provisions were needed by the squadron, officers and men might be free to land in such numbers as would not be inconvenient to the inhabitants of Taku." The officer charged with this missive found that the obstacles, instead of being removed, were in course of completion. He was again unable to communicate with any person who would own to an official character or employment, and was at last obliged to leave the Admiral's letter with peasants on the beach, who denied that any promise had been given to clear the passage, declared that it would take a month to do so, and once more affirmed that there were no officials near the spot.

¹ Wade's narrative, before mentioned.

The Admiral's narrative gave rise to much anxious debating in the cabin of the *Magicienne* that evening, and indeed it must be allowed that the condition of affairs it described could not well be more unsatisfactory. The river—our highway to Peking—was blocked up; contrary to the assurances of Kweiliang, there was no one to receive us or to attend to our wants; and the authorities, whose existence we could not doubt, met our attempts to communicate by sedulous concealment, and left us to seek information from fishermen and peasants. On one point there could be no hesitation: it would not do to put up with any more Chinese trifling.

The anchorage off the Pei-ho, apart from the mournful recollection I have naturally preserved of it, appeared to me detestable in every way. Shallow waters and the boisterous winds of the Gulf of Pechili made it uncomfortable for even the most seasoned of sailors, while nothing could be more wearisome to the eye than its wide expanse of chopping seas of a dirty, bilious green, unrelieved by the straight, grey line of flat coast that just marked the horizon and was broken at one single point by the mean-looking fortifications of Taku, and the masts of the junks that lay behind them in the first bend of the river. The dreary, shabby prospect would have been unendurable, had not our gaze eagerly stretched far beyond it and taken in, as it were, the huge, shadowy metropolis which we then believed to be our certain goal, and which—

for one of us at least (poor de Normann)—reserved martyrdom and an untimely grave. I find it difficult, after such a repulse as that which awaited us, to realise the blind confidence with which we were all imbued at this time. Nevertheless, I believe that if the whole force had been canvassed no one would have been found in it who doubted for a moment our ability to overcome with ease any opposition that might be offered by the faithless Government of Peking. Personally I had some time before had a vague presentiment that serious resistance was intended. Shortly before we left Shanghai, I remember discussing the point with Mr. Bruce, and taking upon myself to suggest that it might be well to make assurance doubly sure by summoning up the Royals from Hong-Kong, and, if necessary, applying to India for further reinforcements. Those, however, who knew most of Chinese warfare—and our squadron was full of such—had but one dread, namely, that no real stand would be made, and they would thus be disappointed of a brush with the insidious foe.

On the 21st it was resolved to wait no longer, and a formal letter was addressed to the Admiral requesting him, in the joint names of the French and British Envoys, to clear the passage for their progress up the river. The council of war at which this determination was come to was held under adverse circumstances, the sea running so high as to make communication with the flag-ship and the

French corvette a matter of difficulty. Next day all boat communication became impossible, but the following morning (Thursday the 23rd) the weather moderated, and our eyes were gladdened by sight of the gun-boats coming out of the mouth of the river, where they had been engaged in preparations for the final move. A reconnaissance—unfortunately, as it proved, too slight a one—had been made, and had shown the obstacles placed in the river to be more formidable than had been supposed. Not only was the channel full of iron stakes, but several heavy booms, chained together and made into a huge raft by intermediate pieces of timber, were laid across from side to side. At the same time the embrasures in the forts were covered with matting, and not a soul could be seen stirring in the works. Indeed, but for the peaceful junks anchored higher up, it might well have been believed that, at sight of the barbarian vessels, the whole country had risen in terror and fled. Yet behind these silent walls lay the flower of the Tartar army, under the orders of Sangkolinsin, a Mongol prince of the blood, of high renown, who was the hope and mainstay of the war party at Peking.

The Admiral now came on board and told us that all his measures had been taken, and he was ready to force a passage the next day. At this juncture it was that the American Minister, who had hitherto taken no part in our councils, informed Mr. Bruce and M. de Bourboulon that he had resolved

to make a demand for passage similar to theirs, and that, if met with a refusal, he would join them in the attack. He begged, therefore, that operations might be delayed another day to enable him to make the attempt. Our chief was too elated at the prospect of seeing the three flags combined not to accede at once to this request, and the attack was therefore postponed to the 25th. Mr. Ward's efforts to communicate with any one in authority failed like all those that had preceded it. He went over the bar with Commodore Tatnall in his tender, the *Toey-wan*, but his interpreter found no one but a militiaman—for such he represented himself to be—who, however, stated that any attempt to remove the booms would at once be the signal of fire from the forts. The *Toey-wan* ran aground in the river and could not be got off, and thus the American Minister was prevented from conveying any intimation of this significant threat to his colleagues, and remained a forced, but by no means indifferent, spectator of the action that ensued.¹

The die was now cast, and we were surrounded by the din and bustle of warlike preparation. As for us peaceful diplomatists, our excitement rose to fever-heat, and we begged to be allowed to go on board one of the light draught vessels that were to move up the river—a request which, fortunately for

¹ It may, I think, be fairly doubted whether such a threat, uttered by a person of no position or authority, would, at this stage of the proceedings, have in any way deterred the British and French Envoys from asserting their right to a passage, if needs be, by force.

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us, as it afterwards turned out, the Admiral smilingly but firmly refused to grant. By noon of the 24th our frigate had become a solitude, the whole available force of combatants on board (115 officers and men) having embarked with Vansittart in big launches which the gun-boats took in tow. We had never seen our captain in such high feather before. He had been in weak health for some time from the effects of China fever, but as soon as he snuffed powder in the air he became another man, and trod his deck with the gaiety of a middy told off on his first boating expedition, rather than the gravity of a post-captain inured to battle and renowned throughout the service for his cool daring. His high spirits spread all through the crew, and certainly each man of them, as he went over the ship's side that morning in full fighting trim, seemed flushed with that "innate warlike passion" which Kinglake, with more eloquence than modesty, claims as "the gift of high Heaven" to our "chosen race."

Time hung heavily on our hands the rest of that day. When we had done watching our contingent and those from the other ships being towed by the puffing and snorting gun-boats over the distance of eight or nine miles that divided our larger vessels from the river mouth, we could do nothing but wander restlessly from cabin to cabin, making ineffectual attempts at conversation, and equally ineffectual ones to read or to keep silent, so strung

up were our nerves. Mr. Bruce, Wade, and I broke the tedium of the afternoon by a visit to the American frigate *Powhattan*, where we found officers and crew chafing at neutrality, and eagerly hoping that their flag too might be committed to action. They were of course, like ourselves, entirely unaware of the mishap to the *Toey-wan* which had alone prevented their Minister from throwing in his lot with ours. At half-past ten that night, as we were having our last cigar on deck, we distinctly heard an explosion, which we supposed to be the blowing-up of the booms. It was that operation, unfortunately only imperfectly carried out, as our vessels learnt to their cost the next day.

The morning of the attack now dawned. At an early hour, when I was still in my cabin dressing, Perrini brought me word that two Chinese junks had come alongside with some message, it was said, for the Minister. I hurried on deck and found there a petty Mandarin, escorted by a ragged rabble, who was charged with a letter to Mr. Bruce from Hangfuh, Governor-General of Chi-li, stating that he had been sent by the Emperor "to Pehtang, a port to the north of Ta-ku," to do the honours. Kweiliang and Hwashana, as the negotiators of last year's Treaty, had been summoned to exchange the ratifications; he, Hangfuh, was engaged in disarming Peh-tang, heretofore a fortified place. When the men and guns had been moved to the southward, he would come out in a junk to welcome Mr. Bruce

to Peh-tang, whence he (*Mr. Bruce*) might proceed overland to Peking as soon as *Kweiliang* and his colleague had arrived. The italics are mine, and mark Mr. Bruce's reasons for treating this letter, which reached his hands at the eleventh hour, as unworthy of consideration. In effect, he was now again asked to do what he had declined to do at Shanghai, namely to wait till the Commissioners had reached Peking, which he knew from themselves they could not do for several weeks. Had he consented to this delay, he would then have been represented to the Chinese Court and people as humbly and patiently waiting at their gate till it was the Imperial pleasure that he should be let in; and when at last the decree had gone forth for the admission of the suppliant, his progress *by land*—that is, at the mercy of the Chinese officials charged to conduct him—would have been marked by a succession of studied slights and indignities such as shortly afterwards fell to the lot of the American Envoy. On the ground of consistency alone, therefore, he could not possibly entertain the proposal. Further, he knew that the Admiral was, at that very moment, moving up the river (10 A.M. was the hour appointed for the advance), and at the distance that divided us from Ta-ku, it was more than doubtful whether a request to suspend operations would reach that officer in time. Mr. Bruce declined, therefore, to receive the letter, on the plea that it was informal in the place assigned to the characters indicating

the Queen's name,¹ and intimated to the bearer that any further communications must be addressed to him at Tien-tsin.

Ten o'clock struck, then eleven, then twelve, and still not a sound reached us from the direction of the river. I had been straining my eyes the whole morning gazing through spy-glasses at the forts, and was reading in Wade's cabin, when, at twenty minutes past two, St. Clair called to us through the hatchway that the attack had begun. The entry in my diary for the time accurately describes the effect of this announcement: "rushed on deck cheering like mad!" Indeed they were hard at it, and when a quarter of an hour later we saw and heard a tremendous explosion (one of the enemy's powder-magazines had been blown up) we gave another ringing cheer, so certain did we feel that John Chinaman was getting the punishment he so richly deserved. Behind the shore-line which, as I have said above, is low and flat, the river takes so sudden a bend that our vessels were entirely concealed from us. We could only see the clouds of smoke, and now and then an angry flash tearing those clouds asunder. The firing went on without intermission till about four o'clock, when it percep-

¹ The character signifying her Majesty is not on a level with that signifying the Emperor, as by the fixed rules of Chinese official composition it would be, were it employed in speaking of the Emperor himself. This marks a non-appreciation of the complete equality we claim for our Sovereign with all others, the Emperor of China included, and I should recommend that the original be returned for correction. [Minute by Wade endorsed on the translation of Hangfuh's letter.]

tibly slackened. "A long stand they have made," thought we; "but now they are sullenly yielding." We sat down to dinner in good spirits, and were half-way through the meal, when the firing redoubled again. "Too long a stand," said Wade; "this is not the usual style of Chinese fighting."

We could bear the suspense no longer. Nearly all the boats, and all the boats' crews, had left the ship the day before, but we knew of a cranky old gig that was still available, and resolved to man her ourselves and make for the *Hesper* troopship, that lay half-way between us and the shore, and would doubtless have some intelligence respecting the action. De Normann, St. Clair, Wyndham, and I, with three non-combatant officers of the frigate, made up a scratch crew, and, hoisting a sail, we were soon under way. We had gone more than two miles, or about half the distance, when the wind, which had till then served us, suddenly veered round and set right in our teeth. We took to our oars, the tide flowing fast against us with an ugly, chopping sea. Add to this, feeble and uneven pulling, a boat that leaked, so that, sitting by turns in the stern-sheets, we had to bale out the water with an empty sardine-tin, a pitch-dark night with only now and then the flash of a gun on the horizon to point out where the land lay, and it will be seen that we were in anything but a cheerful predicament. It was hopeless to continue on our course, and our only chance was to make again for the

frigate. How we managed to reach her I can hardly tell, for the wind and waves rose every minute, and we shipped numerous seas that all but swamped us, but finally found ourselves on board again, much exhausted and drenched to the skin, and as ignorant as before of the details of the fighting. To de Normann I think we owed much that evening, for he pulled best and steadiest of us all, and showed perfect coolness throughout. But he came of a good stock, and combined German earnestness and British pluck—qualities which developed into heroic fortitude during the fortnight of fiendish torments he afterwards endured, and have shed a mournful lustre on his name. Tired as I was, I slept but little that night, and, as I lay facing the open port, heard at intervals the sullen boom of a big gun preceded by the burning of blue lights. What could they be firing at in the darkness?

The morning of Sunday the 26th broke with glorious sunshine, calm weather, and perfect silence. The forenoon wore on, and it was fully eleven o'clock when the officer of the watch descried vessels coming out of the river, and presently reported the *Coromandel*. As she drew nearer she hoisted a signal: "Send cot for wounded officer." There was nothing alarming in this; so obstinately fought an action had prepared us for casualties. Our assistant-surgeon went off with all needful appliances, and steered for the Admiral's tender,

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which had meanwhile steamed closer and was now within easy distance of us. She now hoisted a second signal: "Admiral wishes to confer with Minister." But before Mr. Bruce could return from the interview we already knew the worst. The surgeon above-mentioned had brought back a full tale of defeat and slaughter. Our intrepid captain was the officer for whom the cot was wanted. He had just undergone amputation of the leg on board the *Coromandel*, and wished to be brought back to his own ship.

We soon had more ample proof of the extent of our disaster. The same launches that had taken off our lusty, exulting shipmates now drew alongside with a sadly diminished freight of maimed and shattered humanity, and it was a piteous sight to watch the poor fellows crawl up the accommodation ladder down which we had seen them step so jauntily just two days before. Presently came a boat with Vansittart himself, whom we all lent a hand to hoist up in the cot where he lay with a calm, white face, but with that look of things beyond which so seldom misleads. Altogether it was a miserable business, and being the first and only occasion on which I have witnessed the sterner aspects of war, left on me an indelible impression.

It had indeed been a most disastrous day. The leading gun-boat—the *Opossum*, I think—had been stopped by the imperfectly destroyed booms, and the others crowding in upon her in the narrow and

shallow channel, they all got aground in turn, and thus—unable to move either forwards or backwards—had become easy targets to the seventy guns of the forts, carefully trained on this one spot, which now suddenly opened upon them. Our vessels had, in fact, blindly rushed into the trap cunningly set for them, the formidable character of which too superficial a reconnaissance had prevented their realising. After some hours of severe and most unequal fighting, it had been resolved, as a desperate resource, to land the marines and small arms companies and try to storm one of the forts, which, if taken, would have given us the key of the whole position. The landing unfortunately took place at low water and just before dark, and our men, in jumping out of the boats, at once sank over their knees in the ooze and tenacious mud of a beach which was thoroughly raked by the fire of the works in front of them. Under this deadly hail-storm such of them as did not fall at once advanced, dropping in tens and twenties as they went, or floundered into deep ditches where they lost their scaling-ladders and wetted their rifles and ammunition. It was quite dark when a determined band of some sixty men—over one-half of them officers—reached the last ditch at the very foot of the fort, and there lay down for upwards of an hour waiting for reinforcements which never came, for the simple reason that there were none left to send. Some old Crimeans among this undaunted handful

swore they had recognised Russian uniforms and had heard Russ spoken in the fort, and their statements led to an idle report of secret Russian co-operation with the Chinese. It is just possible that deserters from the forces on the Amoor may have helped to work the Chinese guns, but I should be equally ready to believe that there were English deserters there too. The scum and refuse of mankind had long made China one of their favourite hunting-grounds.

The action was irretrievably lost. Five of our vessels were sunk (two of these, the *Cormorant* and the *Lee*, remained in Chinese hands), and we had a casualty list of nearly 500 men out of a total force of probably 1200. The Admiral himself was severely wounded, as were the seconds in command, Captain Vansittart and Shadwell. So was also the gallant French captain, Tricault, one of the slender party who had lain under cover of the last ditch. Bitter as was the confession, we were obliged to admit that all further operations were impossible with the force left to us. Our sunken vessels, however, must be removed, if possible; so, during the fortnight consumed by this arduous and dangerous operation, we lay listlessly in the offing in our big ships under the blazing sun of July—the northern summer had mockingly set in with all its glory and fierceness—surrounded by the wounded, the dying, and the dead, who were borne out by the treacherous river and came floating past us—a ghastly, sickening

sight. One lovely evening, I remember pointing out to an officer on deck an object at some little distance that kept bobbing up and down in the light on the curly water. He put up his glass, gave me a queer look, and then ordered a boat to pull towards it. It was the body of some officer sewn up in a hammock, from which the shot that was to submerge him had got detached. What we saw was the head of the corpse floating upright, and the body had to be thrust through before it could be made to sink for ever "beneath the wave."

Most trying of all, perhaps, was the boom of the enemy's guns, which began as soon as night had closed in—each shot preceded by a blue light by which the gunners directed their fire at our men working under cover of the darkness to raise their sunken vessels. Fortunately the Chinamen made very bad practice; but there was something inexpressibly saddening, and at the same time galling, in the sound to which we knew that no reply could be made on our side. The tedium and tension of these days were only relieved by the bright tales of deeds of individual gallantry which cropped up hourly with the details of the action. The Admiral himself had been simply "heroic," as Tricault—no mean judge—expressed it to me. He had shifted his flag at least three times from one sinking vessel to another, and, though wounded at the outset and afterwards disabled, had never given up the command. Conspicuous, too, for their intrepidity were

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Commerell,¹ who subsequently reaped further glory in Africa, and Commander Jones of the *Lee*, one of the vessels hopelessly lost. Poor Jones—"Gallows Jones" his friends used to call him—was one of the finest and most promising officers in the service, and unquestionably the most amusing I ever met. I see him now in the cabin of the *Magicienne* trying on the kit of clothes we had scraped together for him, and keeping us in fits of laughter when everything he had in the world—a few hundred pounds' worth—was lying at the bottom of the river.

Perhaps the instance of cool daring that struck me as most remarkable was that—related, I think, by Jones—of a boatswain (I unfortunately forget his name) who, in the thickest of the fight, volunteered to be slung over the side of his sinking ship, where he worked below the water-line plugging a hole, coming up to breathe under the hottest fire imaginable, and being, in fact, the whole time between asphyxia and round shot. But it is invidious to quote special cases when all had behaved so admirably. This obscure, hopeless, mismanaged affair—now utterly forgotten and merged in the events of the great campaign of the following year of which it was the cause—deserves to the full as brilliant a pen as that which has so minutely and imperishably chronicled the day of Balaclava. Indeed, in the errors committed and the redeeming heroism shown, it much resembles that splendid piece of military

¹ The late Admiral Sir Edmund Commerell, G.C.B.

folly. Surely the rewards of history are unfairly portioned out. The ride of the “ten beautiful squadrons” is set for ever in the most gorgeous page of our military annals, while the record of the landing of our humbler marines and blue-jackets remains pigeon-holed in dust at the Admiralty.

Before leaving the scene of our disaster, I must pay a heart-felt tribute to the bearing of the American, Commodore Tatnall. The *Toey-wan*, as I said before, had got aground, and from her deck this type of Southern chivalry had watched the contest with ever-increasing impatience. At last, *n'y tenant plus*, he ordered his gig to be manned and, through a fire so tremendous that his coxswain's head was taken off by a round shot and his boat smashed to pieces alongside the Admiral's vessel, he steered straight for the British flag in danger, and, coolly stepping on deck, inquired how the Admiral was doing. When afterwards asked why he had thus exposed himself, he simply replied that Sir James Hope had called upon him a few days before, and that he had had no earlier opportunity of returning his visit. He had to borrow a boat to go back to his own vessel, but the crew of his gig concealed themselves on board the English gun-boat and helped to work her gun throughout the action.¹ In explanation of this unneutral proceeding, it was that the old man gave vent to his memorable saying: “After all, sir,

¹ Wade states, no doubt on good authority, that the *Toey-wan* helped to tow up our boats carrying the landing party.

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blood is thicker than water!" Grand words, that should be carefully treasured up in every habitation of the Anglo-Saxon race. Could but more such instances of American brotherly feeling be quoted.

At last the weary task was accomplished. Of the five sunken vessels three had been raised from their slimy bed and brought safely out of the river—the *Lee* and *Cormorant* remaining to mark the short-lived triumph of the Chinese. How thorough an ambuscade they had prepared for us is shown by the fact that, before the action, our officers were assured that the obstructions in the river were not devised against us, but as a protection against pirates, while, after our repulse, the Emperor issued a boastful decree expressly stating that San-ko-lin-sin had been ordered to fortify the passage so as to keep us out. Another circumstance worth recording is that so little was the Imperial commander assured of his success that it was not till several days after the action, when it became evident that we did not contemplate a renewal of the attack, that he ventured to flaunt his Tartar banners from the Taku walls in sign of victory.

The maimed and baffled squadron now once more shaped its course for the south, and at the Saddle Islands (a group off the entrance to the Yangtse) we were transhipped to the *Coromandel*, which was to take us back to Shanghai. Here we took a last sad leave of Vansittart, who was fast sinking and breathed his last two days after we left his ship.

"Brave as Nelson, gentle as Collingwood," might well be said of him. The navy in him sustained an irreparable loss. The fight, with all its heroism, and mortification, and slaughter, was now well behind us, but to our chief remained the bitter task of reporting home a failure, which he rightly foresaw would be mainly laid to his account, however unfairly. Written explanations could hardly be deemed sufficient in such an emergency, so he resolved to send me home for the purpose of furnishing any additional information that might be desired by the Government.

At this period it was that Mr. Bruce displayed the strength of character and nobility of disposition to which I have before paid my tribute. He was, indeed, sustained throughout by the conviction that his policy, although temporarily thwarted, was the only right one, but he none the less keenly felt the disaster that had befallen our arms and the cruel sacrifice of life it had entailed. Yet he did not shrink an instant from taking upon himself the entire responsibility of the operations, although he had, of course, in no way controlled their execution. Almost his last words to me when I took leave of him at Shanghai were: "Remember! I stand or fall with the Admiral!" But I have approached delicate ground, and it is no part of these purely personal recollections to awaken long-laid controversies, or still less to dwell on the treatment which Mr. Bruce received at this time in quarters where it

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was least to be expected. I cannot, however, pass over entirely the attitude of the Conservative statesman by whom he had been sent out, and who was no longer in power when I brought home the unwelcome news of his repulse. It certainly was a strange and painful circumstance that, during the debate which took place on the subject in the House of Lords, the ex-Foreign Secretary who had drawn up the instructions under which the British Envoy had acted—instructions which clearly contemplated the possibility of a collision, since they enjoined his taking a sufficient force with him to the north, and especially dwelt on the importance of his asserting a right to passage up the river—should have attacked his policy and disclaimed all responsibility for it, while Lord Palmerston (now become Prime Minister), who might fairly have abstained from defending a course of action for which he was in no way answerable, gave the Envoy his warm and uncompromising support.

I left Shanghai on one of the last days in July, and just before starting had a sharp attack of China fever, accompanied by great nervous prostration, due in great part, I think, to the season of painful excitement and anxiety I had just gone through. In the first week of August I took the homeward-bound mail at Hong-Kong. My voyage was devoid of all incident beyond a storm we experienced at the very outset. It had been blowing in fitful gusts in Hong-Kong harbour the morning I went

on board, and the glass had fallen low enough to make things look ominous. Yet, for the first few hours, we found the sea outside rough, but nothing more. Dinner was just over, I remember, and being still weak from fever, I was seated dozing in an arm-chair on deck when Bersolle, a French Secretary of Legation who was going home invalided, suddenly roused me, pointing straight before him at the same time over the bulwarks we were facing. On what seemed the extreme verge of the horizon, narrowed by the rapidly closing-in night, what looked like a huge green wall was moving towards us with unbroken front, and levelling, as it advanced, the chopping billows round us. A few more seconds and this liquid mound overtopped us, the white crest bent over and broke, and then, simultaneously lifting the keel and striking the ship's side, the enormous wave made her shiver from stem to stern, then bounding on deck ran hissing along, drenching and driving us below and floating all the loose gear that lay about. Nothing could be more sudden. From that moment we lay in the trough of a terrific sea that came tumbling in in wildest confusion from all sides, while the wind veering every minute, and the glass falling at the rate of 0.3 inch an hour, left no doubt that we were within the range of a violent typhoon.

We passed two miserable days and nights, with everything battened down; suffocated by the damp

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heat which specially characterises these storms ; unable to sit, or lie down, or stand, or eat, or read, or sleep ; surrounded by terrified women and children (most of them Spanish passengers from Manilla) ; without any reckoning (we could obtain none) of our exact position in waters which abound in hidden rocks and shoals ; reduced to wait and watch till the fury of the tempest should pass away from us. All we could do was to keep on our course at the lowest possible speed and trust to our not being drawn nearer to the centre of the cyclone that was crossing our path. Fortunately our ship—the same *Pekin* which three months before had taken me from Galle to Hong-Kong—had the most skilful and resolute of commanders in Burne, a Lancashire gentleman of good family and religious training (a brother, I believe, of that distinguished Indian official, Sir Owen Burne), whose cheerful energy and simple trust in Providence gave confidence to all on board. On the third morning a break was visible in the sky—to us it seemed as the first ray of light that shone on chaos—and by the barometrical readings we knew that the centre of the storm was moving rapidly to the westward, and that by keeping steadily on our course, though we made little or no progress, we were certain to be in smooth waters by the morrow.

Just before nightfall of that third day occurred the incident which has so deeply engraved this

tempest on my memory. The sea was still running furiously, but we had picked up heart, and, after such dinner as we could swallow, a few of us had ventured on the wave-swept deck to get a breath of fresh air. As we stood there, holding on to life-lines and stanchions, alternately gazing down into fathomless depths of cruel, mocking green, or glancing upwards at mountains of foam, the officer of the watch called out: "A boat!" A boat, indeed! what craft of that size could live in such a sea as this? Peering out through the blinding spray, we could just discern six silhouettes clearly cut out against the background of raging sea and scudding cloud; half-a-dozen human frames suspended, they looked, in mid-air, and jerked up and down as in some gigantic magic lantern. Then came the clear voice of the captain: "Stop her! Helm hard-a-port!" and, lower in tone, a growling commentary from the chief officer on the risk of attempting such a manœuvre. Our steamer, stopped in her course and daringly swung right round, lay tossing and labouring in the trough of the sea, while the floating wreck of what now distinctly showed itself to be a Chinese *sampan* was borne towards her by wind and waves.

In a minute or two more this water-logged skeleton of a boat was carried right under our bows, where sturdy fellows were standing out on the bowsprit and in the chains watching for her.

A rope was let down, which one of the castaways contrived to sling under his arms, and in the twinkling of an eye the poor creature was hoisted up and on deck. One saved out of the six. The *sampan* now swept past within some ten yards from where I stood by the paddle-box; more ropes were thrown out, but the wind prevented their reaching, and it was dreadful to look down into those five upturned faces, blanched by terror from their native yellow to a ghastly white, to mark their looks of desperate entreaty, and see them drift hopelessly away. Once more the ship was put about, and the wreck—now under our lee—was cast with such force against our side that it went to pieces, but not till, by indescribably rapid and vigorous action, every one of the remaining five had been seized and literally dragged out of the jaws of death.

When next day the poor wretches, thus miraculously preserved, were able to tell their tale, they stated that they were the only survivors from a large junk, bound from some southern port to Singapore, which had foundered two days before with upwards of a hundred souls. They had contrived to scramble into this *sampan*, which, from its excessive lightness, floated like a cork, and had drifted about on the ocean without oars or sails, with no food or drink, and up to their waists in water. We landed them a week later at Singapore, but not without witnessing a curious exhibition of Chinese

character and Chinese logic. On the Sunday, after service, the motley crew of the *Pekin* being mustered as usual on deck, the captain gave out that contributions for the poor shipwrecked Chinamen would be thankfully received from all. From the passengers down to the humblest Lascar or the Somali stokers, every soul on board gave his or her mite; all but the half-dozen smart Celestials who manned the captain's gig. These fellows stolidly declined to contribute anything, saying in effect that the sea has its chances to which all are alike liable—*heute mir, morgen dir*—and that the fact of these men's lives having been saved gave them no claim on other men's purses.

I have little more to add of my journey home. At Point de Galle we found news which to me, with my grateful recollections of Vienna, was of great and indeed painful interest—namely, the disastrous turn which the war that was imminent when I left Europe had taken for the Austrian arms. It was sad to think that the magnificent troops I had daily seen and admired had been overthrown so signally at Magenta and Solferino. At Galle, too, I parted with sincere regret from the gallant commander of the *Pekin*, and two days later was on my way to Suez in the *Simla*. By the time we got to Alexandria my attacks of fever had increased, and in the Mediterranean, where we met with heavy weather, I was so completely prostrated that at Marseilles (which we reached on September 12,

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six months to a day from the date of my embarking there for China) I had to be carried from my berth in the steamer to a bed in the hotel, after confiding my despatches to that distinguished officer, Colonel Yule, of the Indian service, who had been our fellow-passenger from Ceylon.

CHAPTER XVI

LIFE IN ENGLAND, 1860

I LOST no time in going on to London and reporting myself at the Foreign Office. My immediate chief, Lord John Russell, as well as Lord Palmerston, received me with great kindness, and the former told me that the Queen, who was at Balmoral, wished to hear my account of the events in China, but that, being aware of my ill-health, her Majesty, with her habitual consideration, desired I should not hurry my journey north. So gracious a message could have but one reply. I told Lord John that I was ready to go whenever he directed, and it was agreed that I should leave for Scotland by the "limited mail" the following Tuesday; horses would be ordered for me at Blairgowrie by the Queen's messenger going up the day before. Nothing was said to me about the length of my stay at the Castle.

Accordingly, about noon of the last Wednesday in September, I found myself at Blairgowrie, and on stepping out of the train was asked by a smart post-boy whether I was "the gentleman for Balmoral." I replied affirmatively, and was soon on the road in a chariot and pair. But what a climate, and what a

day! The rain came down unceasingly during the whole six hours it took us to reach the Castle; not in drops, but in long threads that seemed to reach unbroken from the clouds to the sodden earth. I sat shivering in a corner of the carriage, passing through world-renowned scenery shrouded in the densest mist, and only concerned in protecting myself from the moisture that streamed in, ruefully speculating the while as to how much of the adipose substance of the wretched Perrini (seated in the rumble) as had not been melted down by China suns might escape being washed away by these Caledonian cataracts. At last, when darkness had long set in, we drew up at the royal residence. A servant came out, who asked my name and showed me to my room. After warming myself thoroughly and dressing, I sought out General Grey, who kindly took me with him to the room where the Household had assembled before dinner. There was not among them a single face that I knew, and this, to a diffident stranger from the Antipodes, was in itself more damping even than the weather outside. I was therefore much relieved when the doors were thrown open and the Queen and Prince Consort, with the Prince of Wales and Princess Alice, passed through on their way to the dining-room. "You will be presented after dinner," said my mentor, as we all followed in.

We sat down twelve, I think, and being of course unnoticed, I had ample leisure to notice

others, while I ate my dinner in silence. I was seated between Lady Churchill and General Grey, so could not have been better off; but there was little conversation. The Queen scarcely spoke at all, and only a few remarks passed between Prince Albert and Sir George Cornwall Lewis, the Secretary of State in attendance, who had arrived that evening and whose carriage, by the way, I had innocently appropriated at Blairgowrie, as I afterwards learned to my great confusion. Dinner was got through quickly, a rather startling effect being produced upon me at dessert by the entrance of her Majesty's piper, who marched round the table performing some wild tune on the instrument which Victor Hugo, with the funniest of confusions, describes as *le pibroch national*. When the Queen had withdrawn with the ladies, the male part of the company sat down again for a short time, during which General Grey—apparently *pour dire quelque chose*—asked me whether I was going on next day to Lord John Russell's at Abergeldie. Before I could reply to this, as it turned out, most important question, some one observed that Lord John was away from home, having gone to Aberdeen to receive the freedom of the city.

We soon adjourned to the drawing-room, where a *cercle* was formed (the company being now increased by the arrival of some neighbours—Lord and Lady Fife, I think, and the Farquharsons of Invercauld)—and her Majesty proceeded to go

round, addressing a few words to each person in turn. She at last reached the corner where I was standing, and Sir George Cornewall Lewis having named me, I bowed my best and lowest, and found myself for the first time face to face with my sovereign, and at once *sous son charme*. The sound of her voice, the kindly look in her face, the tears in her eyes when I spoke of the gallantry and cruel losses of her soldiers and sailors, a certain tender, maternal grace about her—all must have gone straight to any heart, and made an easy conquest of mine, and I could only wish that every survivor of that devoted force had been by to see her and hear her speak. She touched me deeply, and was much moved herself. After talking with me for some little time, she passed on, with a gracious and graceful inclination of the head, leaving with me a sense of singular, all-winning charm which through the long years I have since spent in her service has remained as fresh as ever to this day. The Prince Consort reaching my corner immediately afterwards, I was now duly presented to His Royal Highness. And here I will hazard a confession. Coming after the all-gracious reception just accorded to me, my interview with Prince Albert did not make upon me an altogether pleasing impression. A certain stiffness, not to say *hauteur*, in his manner, a somewhat brusque way of putting his questions, jarred upon me more than, no doubt, they ought to have done, and I could trace in him little

of that genial address which has made his sons the most popular of princes. This was, I feel assured, entirely due to a constitutional shyness from which, according to those who knew him best, he never could quite free himself. At any rate, it effectually chilled me who am afflicted with the same ailment—so well described by the French as *mauvaise honte*—and I was somewhat relieved when he passed on, though, to this day, when I think of his eminent services to the country, and how truly great was the nobility of his disposition, I cannot but deplore that this my only interview with the Prince should have left me with any but the most grateful recollections. But let this pass.

The Court kept early hours in the Highlands, and long before eleven we were all dismissed. I don't know what became of the Household, but I was conducted by a servant to my room, and there left to the sounds of the rain beating against the window-panes and the wind howling down the chimney.

At breakfast with the Household next morning I heard the arrangements for the day discussed: if the weather at all improved (it was still raining cats and dogs) the Prince would probably go out deer-stalking. As for the evening, I was, I confess, cheered by the announcement that a few people in the neighbourhood had received the royal commands, and there might perhaps be a dance. There was no thinking of out-of-door exercise in such a downpour, so, not

knowing what to do with myself, I went back to my room and to a book I had fortunately brought with me, and sat there till past noon, expecting any moment to be summoned to give her Majesty a fuller account of the Peiho action than she could have possibly derived from the short conversation with which I had been honoured the night before; I had brought plans and sketches with me for the purpose.

A knock at the door, and enter Lord —, charged for the nonce with the duties of Master of the Household.

“Are you going to Abergeldie to-day?”

“No,” I replied, “I had not even thought of doing so, and besides I hear that Lord John is away at Aberdeen.”

A pause, and then Lord — again: “Because if you *are* going to Abergeldie, I must find some conveyance to take you and your things over there.”

“No need of that,” I rejoined. “I am not asked there to stay, and if I went over, would only just pay a visit and come back.”

Another and longer pause, Lord — meanwhile walking up and down the room. “The fact is,” he said at last, “that your name is not down on the dinner list for to-night.”

“Oh!” I exclaimed—the whole thing of a sudden flashing in upon my denseness and ignorance—“I see now; notice to leave! How can I get away from here?”

"Well, I don't know," he replied, looking, I must say, red and uncomfortable. "A coach passes here three times a week, though I can't say whether this is the day. But I will go and inquire."

He soon came back to say there was no coach. I represented to him that as I must go at once, I hoped he would provide me with some conveyance. This he promised to do, and having meanwhile summoned Perrini, I had my things packed with all speed. At two o'clock I went down to luncheon and took leave of the Household. Sir George Lewis did not conceal his surprise when I announced my departure, and shortly before three I left the Castle by a back door, where I found a dog-cart with a stableman out of livery, next to whom I took my seat, with Perrini and my luggage back to back with me.

Thus, in the pouring wet, with such shelter as my umbrella afforded, I was driven the eight or nine miles that divide Balmoral from Castletown of Braemar. So far, so good; but what seemed to me rather aggravating was, that I could get no farther that day, and thus had to spend the rest of the afternoon and evening in a cold, cheerless room at the inn, eat a solitary dinner, and then undergo the discomfort, and in my weak state of health the fatigue, of starting at daybreak next morning to catch the first train that left Blairgowrie. Nor were my troubles over then, for at Perth I had to take a slow train, ultimately reaching Euston Square at

5 A.M. the next day. Such were my experiences, due in part, no doubt, to my not having been told at the Foreign Office that my stay at the Castle would not exceed one night. Nevertheless, I own to feeling somewhat aggrieved at the time. I might, under the circumstances, it seemed to me, have been allowed to stay on and have my meals in my room until the departure of the coach the next day. But the ways of Courts are much the same all the world over; the fault, if there be any, resting with those who are charged with the management of royal Households.

“Es ist eine alte Geschichte,
Doch bleibt sie immer neu!”

On my return to London I speedily began to find myself at home in my own country. I was *ex officio* a member of the St. James's Club, at that period comfortably housed at the corner of Bennett Street and St. James's Street, in the rooms which, some two generations before had witnessed the revels and heavy gambling of Crockford's; and I also found that, while away in China, I had been elected to White's—an unexpected distinction to which I would probably not myself have pretended. Having, however, got into what was then the most exclusive of clubs by the well-meant exertions of kind friends during my absence, I have kept my name in it ever since. Of course one meets, or rather met, there the best of company, and at periods of political excitement it used to be a very interesting

resort. I had taken lodgings at No. 13 Bury Street, being drawn thither by the fact that my friend Gerald Dillon¹ had rooms there. Dillon, who was then on leave from Vienna, where he had succeeded me, has since left the service in which he was a universal favourite. We have passed many a pleasant hour together, and to him I am indebted for my first and perhaps most delightful experience of English country life. "I am going down to Cornbury Park," he told me one day, "to stay with my uncle Churchill, and have his leave to bring you with me. Will you come?—they will be very glad to see you." I accepted, the more readily that I had had a glimpse of my future hostess at Balmoral, and she had seemed to me most charming. Besides, there was nothing to keep me in town at this dead time of year, and, with returning health and strength (though for some years afterwards I had recurring attacks of malarial fever), I was better away from the temptations and pitfalls of a life of idleness in London.

In the mildest of November weather I found myself under the hospitable roof of the Churchills, and such was their kindness that, although originally asked down for a week, I spent with them nearly two months, broken by an occasional run of a day or two up to town. The house is old and full of interest, and though not very large, is exceedingly commodious and comfortable. It once

¹ Now Lord Clonbrock.

belonged to the great Lord Clarendon, who took his second title from it, and many interesting traditions attach to it, while, standing on the verge of Wychwood Forest (of which Lord Churchill was Ranger) it can boast of one of the few bits of real woodland scenery remaining in the kingdom. With many other attractions and accomplishments, Lady Churchill is a perfect horsewoman, and she was truly *bonne à voir* in those days on her favourite chestnut hack. A comfortable pony was found for me, and thus, with her and with his lordship, and whoever else happened to be staying in the house, we went long, delightful forest rides, or occasionally had a look at the Heythrop pack which hunts the surrounding country. Among other visitors at Cornbury were Flora Macdonald and handsome Comtesse Wally Hohenthal (now Lady Paget), who, being in England with the Princess Royal, came over from Windsor for the Woodstock ball and a great *fête* given at Blenheim for the Prince of Wales, then studying at Oxford. We also had our hostess's mother, Lady Conyngham—still retaining traces of her great beauty—Sir William Somerville, the Caulfelds,¹ Henry Byng² and his sister, a Paget or two, and others. I stayed with the Churchills over Christmas, and at the New Year, when I made up my mind to give up my appointment and go *en disponibilité* for a time rather than

¹ Afterwards Lord and Lady Charlemont.

² Subsequently Lord Strafford.

return to China, I moved into a lodging on the second floor of a house (No. 4) in Albert Terrace, Knightsbridge, exactly facing Sloane Street, and here lived for upwards of two years and a half.

The chief recommendation to me of my new quarters was their proximity to the French Embassy, where, under the genial, but decidedly eccentric, sway of the Persignys, I soon found as good as a home. A few doors from me, too, lived my friend Jaucourt; and in the same house with myself, on the first floor, a very nice fellow belonging to the Russian Embassy, Paul Koutousoff Tolstoy. The Persigny house and the Austrian Embassy at Chandos House, tenanted for so many years by the kind and courteous Apponyis, were certainly my chief resources at first. The Apponyis, who had known me as a boy in Paris, and whom I had since then met again at Turin, gave me the kindest welcome; and I saw a great deal of their staff, which at that time comprised poor Wimpffen, who was destined to so sad an end in Paris, and Kálnoky, who of late years has been managing the foreign relations of his country with consummate tact and ability.

Among this set was started, in January 1860, the idea of some French theatricals, in which I was asked to take a part, and we secured for them a big ballroom recently added by Musurus Pasha to the Turkish Embassy in Bryanston Square. The affair was highly successful on the whole, our pro-

gramme being composed of *Le Chevalier des Dames* and *Embrassons-nous Folleville!* in which Jaucourt, Falbe, of the Danish Legation, and I, with Comtesse Apponyi and her niece, Comtesse Paumgarten, took the chief parts. But what was really amusing about the whole thing was the cool and unceremonious way in which the poor Turk, when once he had been weak enough to surrender the premises to us, was treated as of absolutely no account in his own house. Not only was the fresh gilding of his brand-new ballroom blackened and damaged by the workmen engaged in putting up the stage by gas-light, his inner yard blocked up by a temporary staircase built to provide access to the back of the scenes, his whole house turned upside down and rendered uninhabitable for upwards of three weeks, but he was scarcely allowed to ask any one to his own party, the list of invitations being sternly kept in their own hands by Mesdames Apponyi and de Persigny. The funniest thing of all was his delight at the quality of the audience that crammed his rooms on the night of the performance. “*Oh! mon cher!*” he burst out to Dutreil, of the French Embassy, who was our prompter. “*Quelle soirée! Il y avait des duchesses jusque par derrière!*” Poor Musurus! I wonder how he liked the bill, and how he contrived to get it settled at the Porte. One thing he certainly achieved by his party—and perhaps to him it was worth the cost. Like his Government, when it was

admitted into the *Concert Européen*, he thereby got a footing in society which he turned to good account, being afterwards for many years the best liked of Turkish Ambassadors.

I spent the whole of 1860 in England, and chiefly in London. I went out a good deal, and before long acquired a fairly good position in the London world of those days. For this I was much indebted to the kindness of the Duchess of Cambridge and her daughters, but most of all to Lord and Lady Palmerston, who gave me so friendly a reception that I soon became one of the *habitués* of that *salon* of Cambridge House, which has never, it seems to me, been replaced. Among other things I well recollect a dinner there on the Derby Day of 1860 (May 23rd). We did not sit down until past nine o'clock, Lord Palmerston having ridden down to Epsom and back, and got home long after his guests had assembled. After dinner, when the ladies had left us, he moved over to the seat vacated by Lady Palmerston, between M. de Persigny and Musurus, and, after discussing Thormanby's victory in the race, went on to talk of the great fight for the championship which had come off a few days before between Tom Sayers and Heenan, giving so wonderfully graphic and enthusiastic a description of it to the two Ambassadors that it was difficult not to believe his having been, as was currently reported, a witness of it himself. It certainly was an uncommon subject to

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select for the entertainment of two foreign representatives utterly unaddicted to sport, but it was eminently characteristic of the man, and I have little doubt that no one more than himself appreciated the humour of the situation.

Most people of course know that their wonderful “cheeriness”—solidly based, by the way, on the most enviable digestive powers—was one of the most distinctive and most valuable gifts of this remarkable couple. It positively did one good to hear Lord Palmerston relate some joke at his end of the table, following it up with a hearty “Ha, ha!” (he was the only man I ever knew whose laughter at his own pleasantries did not spoil their effect), faithfully echoed by my lady from the other end. Never, probably, did this cheeriness show to greater advantage—of course owing to contrast—than during a visit paid by Lord and Lady Russell to Broadlands in November 1861. The party was in some respects a memorable one, for it was the first occasion on which the two statesmen were together under the same roof after the great coolness that had subsisted between them for some years. Lady Palmerston, with her usual considerate kindness, had asked Laurence Oliphant and myself for the week, hoping, as she told us, that it might contribute to Lord Russell giving us the fresh employment we both desired to obtain. All through this week Lord Palmerston’s spirits were at their very best, and it almost seemed as though he were

maliciously revelling in his own good-humour as a set-off to the glum looks and grating voice of the ungenial little statesman who was his guest. Apparently the whole Russell party—essentially amiable though were its womankind—were ill at ease, for they curtailed their visit by a day or so, and, on the morning of their departure, the following amusing little scene took place.

Lady Jocelyn—most charming and lovable of women—who, in those days, was much addicted to photography, had promised the local Romsey artist who acted as her assistant that she would try and get Lord Russell to sit to him. She had told the man to be in waiting that morning in the garden with his apparatus, when, if an opportunity offered, she would manage the thing for him. All this she confided to us at breakfast, but unfortunately the sky was very dark, with now and then a shower, and looked anything but promising for the attempt. As they were to leave by an early train, the Russell ladies went up to their rooms to get ready, and Lady Jocelyn then made her petition to his lordship. He was very good-natured about it, and at once assented. The camera was put up at the foot of some steps leading into the garden, and the great man marched down, drew himself up to his full height, and was taken. Just as the operation was over, the rain began again, and he mechanically put on his hat and walked up the steps, forgetting to uncover as he re-entered the room, whence we

had all been watching through the open door the interesting process he had undergone. A wonderful grey beaver—invaluable it would have been as a stage property, and well known to caricature, wide brimmed, seedy, and very tall—about one third of the owner's height—with a wisp of rusty old crape round it. At the same moment his belongings entered the room, and espying traces of humidity on his collar, affectionately pressed him to put on his overcoat, a very long one, of a dingy brown, in cut not unlike the ulster of modern days. He declined the garment, but dear old Pam, who had been grimly enjoying the whole thing, burst out: "Why, if he puts that on, he will look like an old post-boy! Ha, ha, ha!" and sped his colleague with this parting shot.

Among my pleasantest recollections of 1860 is the Ascot week, which I passed at that lovely place Titness—then occupied by the Ricardos—and in, to me, enchanting society. I have again been at Ascot of late years, but with the immense crowds that now frequent it, it seems to me to have lost much of its beauty and distinctive character; or is it that in those days I was so much younger and most hopelessly in love? A great grief, by the way, awaited me on my return to town. I found that my faithful dog Ben had been stolen out of some news in Lowndes Square, where I had left him to be doctored during my absence, and although I tried every dog-stealer in London, from "the Bishop of

Bond Street" downwards, and offered an ample reward, I never succeeded in tracing him. I have had a dog or two since, but with the loss of poor Ben my dog affections expired. I have preserved a picture of him and his family, done by Lépaulle, a French animal painter of some repute.

Another charming party, still better worth recording, took place at Ashridge in August of this year. It was given in honour of the Duchess of Cambridge and her two daughters; and to meet them, my best of friends, Lady Marian Alford, had gathered together such distinguished people as the Bishop of Oxford, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, and Lord Clyde, not to mention others. Lady Marian, to whom for years afterwards I was indebted for the greatest possible kindness, was a perfect hostess as well as the most accomplished of women, and Ashridge in her time was a delightful place to stay at. Her party on this occasion was a great success. The central figure in it, Princess Mary, was in great force, and made herself most pleasant to all her courtiers, young and old. She was, however, rather hard upon the late Lord —, to whom she seemed to have taken a special dislike. She had amused us greatly one evening by giving a capital recital of Edgar Poe's weird poem the "Raven" in imitation of that other gifted and charming person, Lady Evelyn Stanhope,¹ who was the first, if I remember rightly, to attempt recitation in society; and one

¹ Afterwards Lady Carnarvon.

day, when a party of us were out driving with her in a big break, Lord —, who had been relegated to a seat on the box, turned round and made some perfectly harmless remark which she did not catch. “What are you croaking about up there, bird of evil?” she called out to him; at which he quite lost his temper, and replied: “Really, ma’am, if you cannot stand me even at this distance, perhaps I had better get down and walk!” She made, too, I remember, a funny hit on the Sunday, when somebody having suggested a game of “Aunt Sally” to while away the afternoon, and its being objected to on account of our having a Bishop staying in the house, “Oh! call it Uncle Sammy,” she said, in allusion to Dr. Wilberforce’s well-known nickname, “and it will be all right.”

I must pass rapidly over the rest of my experiences of country-house life in those days. I was a good deal at Bramham in Yorkshire, although somewhat of a fish out of water in that great hunting centre. But I had struck up a considerable intimacy with young George Lane-Fox, who, after beginning life very brilliantly, finally damaged his worldly prospects by becoming a Roman Catholic. Seldom have so many broad acres been forfeited on pure grounds of conscience. But his father, old Mr. Lane-Fox, a truly splendid type of the sporting squire of yore, was as antiquated in his ideas as he was in his clothes—he and old Lord Redesdale were the only men I can remember who

wore dress-coats in the daytime—and in some respects was the most bigoted and narrow-minded of Yorkshire “tykes.” I was several times, too, at Tabley, which in those days was graced by the presence of some charming young ladies, all dispersed now, and the most attractive of them long since dead, alas ! in her prime. I well remember Allen Bathurst,¹ who had been staying there with me, joining me at dinner at White’s one day, and confiding to me his engagement to her. At that time I used to see a great deal of the only son of the house, John Warren,² who has since taken a peculiar turn and entirely shuns society, but with whom, and his wonderfully brilliant friend, the last Lord Strangford, I have passed many a delightful hour at the St. James’s Club, which they both much frequented. The country-side round Tabley is studded with hospitable houses, which were wont to gather large parties for the principal function in these parts, the county ball at Knutsford. Among other houses I was at this autumn, I may also mention Syston, with its magnificent library, now dispersed, and its lovely views over the vale of Belvoir, where genial, fat, old Sir John Thorold gave one the heartiest of welcomes ; that curious, ghostly, old place, Stonor, which in those days could boast of a bevy of the cheeriest and prettiest girls in

¹ The late Lord Bathurst, married to the Honourable Meriel Warren.

² Afterwards Lord de Tabley ; he died in 1895.

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England ; and Minley, where I made several pleasant stays with my old friend Philip Currie and his family.

The Christmas of 1860 I spent at the Duchess of Cleveland's (then Lady William Powlett) at Downham, almost the bitterest Yule-tide I can remember, and the house the coldest ! But its hostess had rare qualities. Besides being most *spirituelle* and agreeable, and kindness itself to those who were so fortunate as to be in her good graces, she was the truest and most unflinching of friends, while, as a striking example of the fast vanishing type of a *grande dame* of the olden time, she is well to be remembered in her generation. Among other so-called *signes de race* (very mistakenly held to be such, by the way) she had the smallest and daintiest foot, of which she was not a little proud, and an amusing trick of hers was to linger in the entrance hall in front of an array of Cinderella overshoes and goloshes, which she affected to press on the ladies who were going out walking with her, lest they should get their feet wet. Not the least of her merits was her aversion to slang of all kinds, and when some one was alluded to before her as "a snob," she rebuked the speaker in a highly characteristic manner. "Snob !" she said, speaking in her quaint, old-fashioned way, very deliberately, and giving each syllable its due ; "I do not know what you mean by 'snob' ! His manners seem to me those of a

gentleman, and he speaks English grammatically." Certainly, "Orangeade and Lemonade," as she and her sister, Lady Anne Beckett, used irreverently to be called, were in every way a credit to English society.

A few days after this visit to Downham, news reached me of Madame de Delmar's serious illness at Paris, where she was staying with my sister and her children at the Hôtel de Londres. I at once went over in bitter January weather and found her still alive, but in the most advanced stage of dropsy, and sinking fast. She lingered on for a few days, but finally expired at mid-day of January 15, 1861. The Duchesse de Galliera—so well known since for her splendid public donations—who was one of her most intimate friends, happened just to have called to inquire after her, and having been shown upstairs, was present at the end. My poor aunt had never really held up her head since the loss of her blind husband little more than two years before, but there was something inexpressibly sad in her coming back to the scene of her former social success to die, in straitened circumstances, at a hotel in the Rue de Castiglione. I am bound to add that the greatest sympathy for her was shown throughout society in Paris. My sister now had to go over to London to prove the will under which she was left universal legatee, and attend to what was soon seen to be a hopelessly involved state of affairs. We travelled together, and she came to

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stay with me in my lodgings for a fortnight or so, after which she went back to her family in Paris. As for me, I remained on in England, went, with somewhat diminished zest, through a second season, and did not go abroad again until the following winter.

CHAPTER XVII

EN DISPONIBILITÉ: 1861-1862

IN this year (1861) it was that my brother Arthur, who had recently returned from the West Indies, where he had held a Colonial appointment, and was now living with his wife in lodgings in my neighbourhood, took it into his head that there was a good chance of upsetting our uncle Rancliffe's will on the score of its having been made under the undue influence of Mrs. —, to whom the estate at Bunney had been left absolutely, to the exclusion of Lord Rancliffe's three sisters and their descendants. Arthur had got into the hands of a low, scheming attorney, to whom his impetuous, oversanguine temper made him an easy prey, and this fellow presented the matter in so hopeful a light that I consented against my better judgment to find the money requisite to bring the case to trial. It came on in the form of an action of ejectment at Nottingham on the 11th of March 1861. I joined my brother there the night before at the "Flying Horse" inn, going down in the same train as our leading counsel, Mr. Edwin James (specially retained to the tune of 300 guineas), whose last big case it very nearly was, for he was

exposed for certain discreditable transactions, and disrobed shortly afterwards. We had some of our leading witnesses up after dinner, foremost of all the old lord's medical man, a Doctor Hutchinson, whose evidence, as related to us, was certainly of a character to upset any will made under such circumstances as those which had attended this one. He and the rest of them all stuck to their affidavits, and it really looked like winning the next day. What took place in the interval it is of course impossible to say, but, considering that the power of the purse lay with the actual possessor of Bunney, and judging, as regards Edwin James, by the light of subsequent occurrences, it is not, I think, unfair to presume that both he and the witnesses were judiciously "squared" by our adversary.

The trial naturally excited considerable interest in the county, and when my brother went into the crowded lobby of the court the next morning several of the leading people of the neighbourhood introduced themselves to him, congratulated him on the plucky attempt he was making, and wished him success in it. We were doomed, however, to defeat. After a brilliant but flimsy opening from our leading counsel (Mr. Hawkins, Q.C.¹ was, I recollect, engaged on the other side), and some wretchedly weak and trumpery evidence from a few of our witnesses, we broke down completely

¹ Now Lord Brampton.

when Hutchinson was put in the box and, with the greatest effrontery, turned clean round upon us. There was an awkward pause, and then Mr. Justice Crompton, addressing himself to the jury, said, "Really, gentlemen, it seems to me that there is no case at all." To which the foreman replied, "We entirely agree with your lordship." "At the same time," the judge added very handsomely, "I feel bound to say that, under the circumstances, Sir Arthur Rumbold was, in my opinion, quite justified in attempting to set aside the provisions of this will." So the matter ended, but what never came out, thanks to the ratting of our witnesses, were such proofs of the abject submission of the testator to every caprice of the person in question as the fact that when one of her sisters died of consumption while on a visit to Bunney, nothing would satisfy her but that the girl should be buried in the family vault; and the far graver assertions of the recanting doctor as to the terror in which the old lord stood of her on account of her knowledge of certain unmentionable circumstances (with which she alone could be acquainted) attending his separation from his wife (Lady Elizabeth Forbes) after only a few months' marriage.

What was still less brought to light was the breach of moral trust committed by Lord Rancliffe towards his sisters (the youngest of whom, Princesse de Polignac, was then still alive) and their children. I had it from my aunt, with whom I

afterwards fully talked over the subject, that on her brother's coming of age he induced her and his two other sisters to join him in cutting off the entail of considerable landed property in Kent that came from their mother as only daughter, and, by the death of her brother, sole heiress of Sir William James, of Eltham. The money thus realised was invested in the purchase of land round the old Parkyns domain in Nottinghamshire, but by some neglect, if not worse, of the lawyers charged with the transaction, no fresh entail was substituted for the old one, and Rancliffe thus acquired complete power of disposal over the entire property. He, therefore, was doubly bound to guard the interests of his sisters and their descendants, and his conduct in willing away absolutely, as he did, a good estate that had been in the family for three centuries cannot, it appears to me, be too severely blamed, and was utterly unworthy of the record of those who preceded him at Bunney.¹ It is only right to add that Mrs. —— made some amends in her will for the evil she had wrought. She left Bunney for life to a spinster niece of hers, and, after her, to Sir William Levinge, the grandson of Lord Rancliffe's eldest sister, and the actual head of the Levinge family. And now I have done with this unfortunate

¹ Isham Parkyns, of Bunney, father of the 1st Baronet, spent most of his fortune in the royal cause. He was a colonel in the king's army, and, as Governor of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, may, I believe, claim the distinction of being the last officer to surrender one of the royal garrisons to the forces of the Parliament.

business, which cost me upwards of £500, a sum I could ill afford to lose.

During this season of 1861, and the preceding one, I took some part in the amateur musical performances which became the fashion then in a certain set, and notably at Kent House, tenanted by one of the most accomplished of London hostesses of that day, Lady Theresa Lewis,¹ and at the Haringtons in Eaton Place. Johnny Harington²—simplest and kindest of souls, and most broken-down of baritones—and his wife were among the first to encourage the comparatively few who, in that happy age, ventured to attempt singing or playing before anything like an audience. No such diffidence troubles the amateur of the present day. We are now, if anything, over-flooded with musical dilettantism, though much of it, I am free to admit, is of a quality superior to that to which we were treated at the period I speak of. At Kent House and at the Haringtons there was, nevertheless, a sprinkling of very fair amateur talent. I had then a tolerably good tenor voice, and found a gifted partner in Miss "Pinkie" Browne, who had a charming soprano and sang extremely well. We produced ourselves chiefly in the somewhat vapid Pinsuti and Campana duets that were then the vogue, but our boldest effort—certainly as far as I was concerned—was a duet from the "Corsaro" (of Verdi's countless operas

¹ Sister of the late Lord Clarendon.

² Sir John Harington, 10th Baronet.

quite the feeblest) at one of Henry Greville's smallest of evening parties before the Cambridges and a very select few; the extent of the temerity being made patent by the fact that Grisi and Mario were, I think, the only other performers on the same occasion! I sang, too, a good deal with Miss Bagge (afterwards Mrs. Fuller), and at the Austrian Embassy with Comtesse Apponyi, in concerted music in which Lady Cecilia Molyneux and Lady Agneta Montagu used to take part. Music in all its branches has ever seemed to me the most fascinating and engrossing of diversions, and I might perhaps have done worse than take seriously to singing rather than to despatch-writing.

In September of this same year, the weather being absolutely perfect, I conceived the rather eccentric idea of a walking-tour on the old north road. On the morning of the 7th I took a cab to somewhere beyond Islington, where I got out, and, to the astonishment of the driver, buckled on my knapsack and trudged on—my face set northwards—as far as Waltham Cross, where I stopped to lunch; going on thence to the “Saracen’s Head” at Ware, at which ancient hostelry, which boasts of a gigantic four-poster used by Queen Elizabeth, I “lay for the night,” as Pepys would have it. My two stages the next day took me, first to the “George” at Buntingford and thence to the “Bull” at Royston. And thus I went on at an easy rate, averaging twenty miles a day (with a digression by

rail to Peterborough and Stamford) till I reached Doncaster. The goal I had set myself was York and the parts that thereto adjacent lie, but at York I expected to find letters, and my impatience was such as to make me take the railway from Doncaster to that city, where I received news that compelled me to retrace my steps—by the London express this time—reaching my lodgings again on the evening of the 16th. Even though the thoughts I carried with me during this expedition were not the most cheerful, I cannot but look back upon it with pleasure. The scenery through which I passed was in many parts charming of its kind, the foliage at its best, the weather simply glorious, and the fare and accommodation at most of these wayside inns—some of them famous posting-houses in the old days—very good indeed. I am convinced by experience that there are many worse modes of spending a week's holiday than in tramping along one of our ancient English highways. I note down below the places and inns at which I rested and put up.¹

My walking powers were pretty good in those

¹ First day, halted for lunch, Waltham Cross; slept, "Saracen's Head," Ware.

Second day, halted for lunch, "George," Buntingford; slept, "Bull," Royston.

Third day, halted for lunch, "George," Caxton; slept, "Fountain," Huntingdon.

Fourth day, halted for lunch, "Angel," Peterborough; slept, "George," Stamford.

Fifth day, halted for lunch, "Red Lion," Colsterworth; slept, "Angel," Grantham.

Sixth day, halted for lunch, "Black Horse," Foston; slept, "Clinton Arms," Newark.

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days, but one of the best things of the kind I ever did was in the following October. I was staying at Bramham, and was asked from there, with George Lane-Fox, to spend a few days with some relations of his, Sir Maxwell and Lady Wallace, at Ainderby near Northallerton. We sent our luggage and servants round by rail, and George Fox drove me over to Boroughbridge, where we lunched, and at two o'clock, in the midst of a heavy shower which recurred at intervals during the rest of the afternoon, started off to walk to our destination, following, for the greater part of the way, that ancient remnant of Roman engineering, the Leeming Lane. We entered Ainderby village as the clock struck seven, having done the twenty two or three miles without a break in exactly five hours. Tom Stonor¹ was staying at Ainderby; and on the day the party broke up, I remember that when the London train which was to take us came in from Leyburn and Bedale, he spotted in it a spare, middle-aged gentleman in clerical garb, who was alone in a first-class compartment. We joined him and travelled with him up to town, and a singularly charming companion he proved to be. He was a no less remarkable person than Monsignor Manning, just coming from a visit to the Dowager Duchess of Leeds at Hornby. I

Seventh day, halted for lunch, at some inn, the name of which I forgot, at Carlton; slept, "White Hart," Retford.

Eighth day, halted for lunch, "Crown," Bawtry; slept, "Angel," Doncaster.

¹ Son of the 5th Lord Camoys.

cannot call to mind ever having had the good fortune to meet him again.

Much the most striking events of that period were connected with the great struggle then being fought out in the United States. It would be impossible for any one who was in England at the time to forget the excitement and indignation produced by the seizure of the Southern Envoys on board the *Trent*. A keen sense of the outrage committed seemed to pervade all classes, and to have come home with equal force to each individual Englishman high or low. Never perhaps was England more at one with itself, and a similar unanimity of feeling would, in these more recent days, have been of the utmost value to British interests. I find in a fragmentary diary which I kept at this time unmistakable evidence of the strength of the national sentiment.

As soon as the news reached England, a Cabinet Council was summoned, and I had it on the same day from Evelyn Ashley¹ that Lord Palmerston, on entering the room where the Ministers met in Downing Street, threw his hat on the table, and at once commenced business by addressing his colleagues in the following words: "I don't know whether you are going to stand this, but I'll be d——d if I do!" The ultimatum demanding the surrender of the prisoners was decided upon there and then, and sent out within two days (on the following

¹ The Right Hon. Evelyn Ashley, son of Lord Shaftesbury, at that time Private Secretary to his step-grandfather, Lord Palmerston.

Sunday), and it is interesting to note how hard the most illustrious of the “peace-at-any-price” party strove even then to check the energy of the Government—a task which they have on more recent occasions so effectually accomplished. Mr. Cobden called twice in Downing Street during the Cabinet Council that day, and used every effort to prevent the despatch of the threatening message. He was, I believe, so far successful that he prevailed on Lord Palmerston, through Sir G. Cornwall Lewis, not to order out the Channel Fleet at the same time, which he had at first intended to do. The Americans on their side did their best to secure support against us, and I was assured on excellent authority that it was a positive fact, though far from generally known, that General Scott had been charged in Paris to offer the Emperor Napoleon an American alliance and Canada as the price of his co-operation.

A few extracts from my diary shall speak for themselves:—

“December 2 (1861).—Dined at White’s with George Fox and Loughborough,¹ and went to the Strand Theatre—a very dull entertainment; adjourned to ‘Evans’s,’ where we met Evelyn Ashley and Richard Grosvenor.² Thoroughly enjoyed the exhibition of national feeling called forth by a song on the *Trent* affair. News received here yesterday by the *Persia* makes me fear they may knock

¹ Afterwards Lord Rosslyn.

² Now Lord Stalbridge.

under ; we should lose a splendid opportunity of giving them the lesson they so richly deserve.

“ *Saturday, December 7.*—Went to Cambridge House in the evening. Only a few people there : Lady Ely, the Flahauts, d’Azeglio, the Poodle, the Flea,¹ &c. Lord Palmerston more charming than ever ; he is suffering from gout, and has his left hand bound up. It is delightful to hear him talk on current events. I asked him this evening what he thought of the Ashburton Treaty, by which we surrendered Maine, and he told me Lord A. had gone out with orders to arrange matters *at any cost*, so that he was not to be blamed for his concessions. The answer to our ‘ ultimatum ’ (?) is not expected till the 29th or 30th.

“ *Sunday, December 8.*—Met Fleming this morning in Piccadilly, who told me that after I left last night the dear old man sat down and talked over the whole of this American question in the most open manner. I wish I had remained a little longer. Dined with Fred Milbank.²

“ *Tuesday, 10th.*—Dined at Chandos House. Apponyi as kind and friendly as usual ; he seems much struck by our national ‘ attitude ’ at this crisis.

“ *Friday, 13th.*—This morning went to see the 1st Battalion of Grenadiers inspected at the Wellington Barracks. They have drafted into it the best men from the other battalions, and thus got the pick of the lot ; I doubt there being a finer

¹ Honourable Frederick Gerald Byng and Mr. Fleming.

² The late Sir Frederick Milbank, Bart.

body of soldiers in the whole world. All the youngsters are overjoyed at going. Poor boys! they will have a rough time of it, I fear; all our hearts are with them. Went into White's, where I heard a very poor account of the Prince.

“ Saturday, 14th.—The inspection of the three battalions, which was to have taken place this morning, was countermanded at the last moment in consequence of the Duke of Cambridge being summoned to Windsor by telegraph. The reports of the Prince varied in the course of the day. In the evening I went to see the amateur theatricals at the Princess's, and found them much better than I had expected. Going into White's afterwards, I heard of the death of the Prince. This is the greatest calamity that has befallen the nation for many a long year. E. Ashley tells me Lord P. is very much cast down. No wonder!”

What Ashley did tell me was that the old statesman had actually broken down and shed tears—the only occasion on which he remembered his doing so. No one, Lord Palmerston had said, was able to realise as he could how great was the loss that England had sustained. This is well understood now, thanks to all that has since been written on the subject, but it was not so well known then. A most wise and able ruler was taken from us on that 14th of December, and left behind him a place in some respects un-filled, prosperous and glorious though the present reign has been.

With the closing days of 1861 I went abroad again: first to Paris for a few weeks, and then on to Nice, where I was very warmly received by my aunt, Mrs. Arabin, now comfortably installed in a snug little *entresol* of the corner house of the Place Masséna and the Quay, facing the Pont Neuf, and so centrally situated that it became the favourite resort of a few agreeable people whom the dear old lady numbered among her friends. The old Duke of Parma was one of her *habitués*, as also the clever Corsican Préfect of Nice, Gavini, with his loud-spoken, flashy wife—such a contrast to our dear, graceful “Gouvernante” of old days—the Portarlings,¹ and others. I have often envied her for her remarkable *talent de réception*, and the unflagging spirits she displayed in society up till the last day of a life extended far beyond the common span, and which had been full of reverses and sorrows borne with exceptional patience and fortitude. But then she was devoted to, and enjoyed, society in a way seldom seen, it seems to me, at the present time; while her recollections—which went back to before the Congress of Vienna—her remarkably accurate memory, and well-cultivated mind, made her a most interesting hostess.² Although the date of

¹ Henry, 3rd Earl of Portarlington, K.P., married a daughter of the 3rd Marquess of Londonderry.

² My aunts were at Brussels, with their mother and Sir Sidney Smith, during the Waterloo campaign, and were present at the memorable ball given by the Duchess of Richmond. They had helped to nurse several of the officers wounded in the battle fought the next day.

some of her reminiscences to a great extent determined her age, it was not until a few years before her death that I ascertained how old she really was, so curiously sensitive was she on the subject, and so brisk and active in mind and body. Among other little weaknesses, she had that of dyeing her hair a jet-black, and thus giving a somewhat hard expression to otherwise very gentle, mobile features. The way I came to know in what year she was born in itself deserves mention. Some ten years before her death, the present Lord Rokeby, in sorting some family papers, came across a small card-case, or letter-case, in faded violet silk, that had belonged to his great-grandmother, Mrs. Southby, a lady who had lived to an exceptionally advanced age, and whose memory was highly venerated both in his family and in mine, of which she was a common ancestress. Inside this pocket-book were found two slips of paper—they were mere scraps—on one of which the venerable dame had put down, side by side, evidently to refresh her memory, the Christian names and birthdays of her great-grandchildren of three families—namely, that of the late Dowager Lady Rivers, of the Montagus, and of my father with his brother and sisters. The other scrap was still more curious, for, in its small compass, the writer had jotted down the chief incidents of a life, extending over upwards of ninety years, in due chronological order, commencing with her birth, in 1715, and her sailing for India as a girl of twenty

in the year 1735. She had made the barest entries of such events as her two marriages (her first husband was a Berriman¹), the births of her children and grandchildren, the murder of her second husband, Mr. W. H. Southby, at Negrais Bassein, Burmah, in 1760, her final return to England, and so forth. Altogether, the very skeleton of an autobiography, though none the less interesting to her family, and in favourable contrast—any one who has the courage to wade through these pages may very well think—with the similar attempt of one at least of her descendants.

I had not been at Nice for twelve years, and now came upon it as a lively French town, in rapid course of transformation into the Brighton of the South of which I have endeavoured to give some description in the first portion of these recollections. I engaged a room at the Hôtel Chauvain, attracted thither by the Ellisons who were installed there for the winter, and at once found myself *en plein cousinage* with them and with the Rokebys, who occupied a house on the *Promenade des Anglais*. These months of February and March 1862 were among the brightest I had ever passed at Nice. I met there again an old Stuttgart friend, Mdlle. de Gall, who had now been married for some years to Mr. James Harris,² the fortunate owner of the charm-

¹ A daughter of this marriage, Frances, was the first wife of Sir Thomas Rumbold.

² Afterwards Sir James Harris, and our very popular Consul at Nice.

ing Villa des Rochers on the old road to Villefranche and of a nice old Palazzo at Genoa to boot. The Harrises, the Portarlings, Mr. and Lady Virginia Sanders, Hippy Damer,¹ Loughborough, and one or two other men, made up, with the Rokebys and Ellisons, an extremely pleasant and almost inseparable coterie. Among the foreigners we also saw a good deal of was a widowed Princesse Hatzfeldt, with an attractive daughter by a first marriage, who, after ruling Berlin society for some years as Comtesse Schleinitz, is now installed as Comtesse Wolkenstein, at the Austrian Embassy in Paris. She is an admirable musician, and a passionate devotee of Wagner, and more than any one has contributed to the Wagner *culte* now professed in France. We had, on the whole, "a very good time" of it at Nice, what between little dances, and picnic luncheon parties all about the neighbourhood; also on one occasion some very successful *tableaux vivants* were got up at the Rokebys, with musical accompaniments in which it is worth mentioning that poor old Tamburini, then on the verge of seventy, took the bass part.

At the beginning of April our cosy little set broke up, but we all agreed to have a final meeting at Genoa, to which place I, for my part, posted along my favourite Corniche road, sharing the expenses with Count Hompesch, an amusing and somewhat harum-scarum Prussian; and M. de Murat, a young

¹ Lionel Seymour Damer, afterwards 4th Earl of Portarlington, married to the second daughter of Lord Rokeby.

Frenchman from Auvergne, who was a rabid Legitimist and repudiated with scorn all connection with the illustrious, but less well-descended, family of the same name. At Genoa, Loughborough, Hippy Damer, and I were the guests of the Harrises at their Palazzo overlooking the splendid harbour. After a few days passed most agreeably with them and the rest of the coterie, we all dispersed for good in different directions, the Rokebys, &c. leaving for England, while I went on to see my brother William, now settled at Florence, whither he had first accompanied Madame de Delmar in 1859, at the time of the general family break-up in Paris, remaining on there ever since. I had not met my brother for upwards of three years, and now found him installed in the Villino Gasperini, which he shortly afterwards left for a small house he purchased in the Piazza del Carmine (No. 25) and which he has arranged with considerable taste. *Casa Rumbold* soon became an institution of its kind in the Tuscan capital, a small set of congenial people, such as the Peruzzis, Mrs. Fleetwood Wilson and her sisters, the Duc de Dino, the Nicolinis, d'Hooghvorsts, and others, often meeting there of an evening, as is the sociable Italian fashion. Florence in spring and early summer is delightful, on condition of one's living like the Florentines—that is, dining early, driving out to the Cascine about sunset, and coming back late to supper and a cool flask of Chianti or Pomino. But the heat soon became intolerable, and drove me

back after a few weeks to my old lodgings in London, where once more I went through all the turmoil of the season, but with greatly diminished ardour. There are considerable gaps in my notes of this period, but they are no loss. I was getting thoroughly tired of having no definite employment, and the gaieties in which I mixed rather palled upon me. It was an extremely wet season, I remember, especially during the Ascot week, which I spent at the Deanery at Windsor with Lily Wellesley and her sister, Lady Winchester. There were, however, some short spells of fine weather, during one of which I went down to stay with the Palmerslons at Brockett. In August, when the town emptied itself, I was kept a prisoner in my lodgings by a tiresome ailment for which I had to undergo serious surgical treatment.

Having nothing now to keep me in England, I determined, as soon as I was sufficiently well to travel, to go abroad once more, and there wait for the accomplishment of the promises which had been repeatedly made me at the Foreign Office that I should ere long be given employment again. Accordingly I gave up my lodgings, parted—most unwillingly—with the faithful Perrini (who, *par parenthèse*, afterwards flourished exceedingly in the courier line), and on the evening of the 20th of August found myself at the Hôtel Vouillemont in Paris. But not for long. Calling at the Austrian Embassy the next day I discovered that Richard Metternich was still

there, notwithstanding the dead time of year, but was living *en garçon*, and on the point of starting for Johannisberg, where Princess Pauline had preceded him some weeks before. We dined, together with Odo Russell, that evening at the Pavillon d'Ermenonville in the Bois de Boulogne, and Metternich made me promise that I would join him on the Rhine and stay with him as long as I liked. I reached the Johannisberg on the evening of the 24th in perfect weather, and was very warmly greeted on my arrival. The only visitors there were Paul de Bussière and Baron Gustave de Gersdorff, a Saxon Court official and a former intimate of the Metternichs in their old Dresden days, but we were soon reinforced by my Brighton friend Princess Mélanie, with her husband, Comte Pépé Zichy. This altogether made up a thoroughly pleasant, harmonious party, and my stay at the Johannisberg, together with another visit I made there two years later, has left me the most agreeable recollections.

The Rheingau in these last glorious summer days was looking its very best, the vine-clad hills giving promise of an abundant *Weinsegen*, and nowhere could one be better placed for excursions up and down the most be-sung and be-lauded, if not most picturesque, of rivers than in our hospitable castle on the sunny slopes over against Bingen. Add to this the best of tables—*ce qui ne gâte rien*—and that rarest of vintages which, to be really appreciated, must, I think, be tasted on the spot.

I do not mean the *grands crus* of the place, priced at from 25 to 60 francs a bottle according to the year, but the table wine, than which in the shape of white wines, to which I confess to being partial, I never tasted anything more delicious. We went down the river to the Rheinstein, and up it to Mayence and Wiesbaden ; we even once got as far as Homburg, where we tried our luck at the tables with the usual ill-success. But what has fastened itself most on my memory, in connection with my sojourn at the Johannisberg, is having been taken several times to see an old Comtesse Ingelheim (mother of the then Austrian Minister at Hanover) who dwelt hard by at Rüdesheim, in a splendid old ruin known as the Brömserburg (originally, it is said, a Roman *tête de pont*), into which a certain number of dwelling rooms, decorated and furnished with great taste, had been built, or, so to speak, fitted. I have never seen anything at all resembling it elsewhere. We used to drive over there in the cool of the evening, and sup in a miniature *rittersaal* with a wide balcony overlooking the mighty current of the Rhine, and as we sat in the gloaming, the old lady, who was the very picture of an *Ahnfrau*, would delight us with the most curious bits of ancient legend and *sage*.

One tale she gave with singular force and vividness respecting an ancient *Stammschloss* of the Ingelheims in Franconia—the Gamburg near Tauberbischofsheim — with the weirdest of traditions

attaching to it, and which had been practically abandoned, although in very good preservation, in consequence of its ill-repute. The tone of thorough conviction with which she related this remarkable tale—by no means a commonplace ghost story—could not but impress her circle of listeners in the strongest way; and what with the scenery around us, the picturesque figure of the old-world dame, and the admirable framework afforded by the grand old ruin of which she had made her abode, it was an experience not easily to be forgotten. Although I neglected to take notes of the story at the time, and have thus lost some of the particulars of it, it struck me as being well worthy to rank with the strange traditions connected with the Glamis and such like mysteries. Robert Lytton, I remember, to whom I recounted it a short time afterwards at Vienna, was quite fascinated by it. Here is the bare outline of the old Countess's statement, as far as I recollect it, and as quite recently confirmed to me by Princess Metternich.

Among the ancestors of the very ancient house of the Counts of Ingelheim, *genannt Ächter von Mespelbrunn*, was a certain bishop who had committed some heinous crime of murder or spoliation, and who, finding no rest in the world beyond this, persistently haunted the old family abode. The most singular feature about his apparitions was that they were always a sure sign that the owner of the castle, when away, was about to return. As in the

first quarter of this century there existed neither railways nor telegraphs, the precision with which the occupants of the castle were thus able to foretell the advent of its master was in itself most remarkable. The husband of the Countess, suspecting some trick on the part of the servants, determined to take them by surprise. He started accordingly from his estate at Geisenheim on the Rhine for the Gamburg one fine morning without having given notice to any one, and, reaching the castle quite late in the evening, after a hard day's posting, was much taken aback at finding all the windows lighted up and his servants and dependants assembled at the entrance to receive him. On his asking how it was they were thus prepared for his arrival, of which he had given no sort of intimation, the *Ober-Amtmann*, or land-steward, replied that "The apparition of the bishop the day before had led them to expect the *Herr Graf* that evening."

The old Countess admitted that she had never actually seen the spectre, although she and her husband had been frequently disturbed at night by strange and uncanny sounds that could not be accounted for. She well remembered, however, that one day as she was seated in her drawing-room, engaged on some needle-work, with her boy, then about three years old, on a footstool at her feet, the little fellow suddenly got up and, pointing towards the door, exclaimed: "There is a man there!" The mother looked up, and seeing no

one, told him it must be fancy. But he persisting, and saying, "No, mother! I am quite right, and here he comes!" she said to him, "Well then, go and give him your hand." Whereupon the child went towards the door, deliberately made the gesture of reaching up to give his hand to somebody much taller than himself, and proceeded thus to cross the room, till he all at once cried out: "Ah! but now he is gone!" showing throughout not the slightest symptom of fear or disturbance. Many prayers and masses were said for the soul of the unfortunate bishop, and one specially pious native of the neighbourhood undertook a pilgrimage to Rome on foot, in hopes of procuring rest and pardon for the wretched sinner. He asserted that on his return the bishop had appeared to him, and, with a sad smile and a look of profound gratitude, had pointed to his heart, which before had been outwardly marked on his white episcopal garment by a big, black stain, and now only showed a much smaller and fainter spot. Thus far this curious and touching legend, respecting which, as I have said, I not long ago compared notes with Princess Metternich. The remarkable fact about it remains that the Ingelheims were so much annoyed and disturbed by the strange tradition, that, for a time at least, they gave up residing on their Franconian domain.

The pleasantest visits come to the speediest end, and on the 8th of September I took leave of the

Metternichs and left for Baden-Baden in company with the Zichys.

I must hurry over the next two months. At Baden I joined Cuddie Ellison, with whom, before leaving England, I had arranged to make a tour through Southern Germany. After the Baden races were over, we started, as agreed, travelling leisurely, and stopping at Augsburg, Munich, and Salzburg, till we got to that lovely place Ischl, remaining there a whole week, and finding, besides George Barrington,¹ a number of my old Vienna friends —among others Princess Dietrichstein and her daughters—who welcomed me with real Viennese *Herzlichkeit*. What, however, quite amazed me was to meet, living in the greatest intimacy with this Austrian *crème de la crème*, my Turin flame, Ippolita d'Adda, who had utterly renounced Italy and the Italian movement, had turned *schwarzgelb*, and was on the outskirts of *la haute dévotion*. From Ischl we went on to Linz and down the Danube to Vienna. Here Cuddie and I parted, and I lingered on at the “Erzherzog Karl,” without any definite plans, for a fortnight or more till, when I least expected it, a letter reached me from Lord Russell offering me the vacant Secretaryship of Legation at Athens.

I was overjoyed at getting into harness again, and at once arranged to proceed to my post by easy stages through Italy, taking Venice and Florence

¹ George, afterwards 7th Viscount Barrington.

on my road, intending to embark at Leghorn for Messina, where the French Messageries steamers then touched on their way to the Piraeus. Robert Lytton, whom I had been seeing daily at Vienna—and most delightful company he was in those days—gave me a letter to that distinguished antiquary and master of Venetian lore, Mr. Rawdon Brown, under whose guidance I saw as much of Venice as could be crowded into the very few days I was able to devote to it. I might perhaps have prolonged my stay in this most enchanting of cities, had not the weather been oppressively hot—although we had already reached the third week in October—and the mosquitoes simply unbearable. I left Venice on the evening of the 17th, and took a late train to Padua, where I slept. Overnight I had chartered a carriage and pair to take me on to Ponte Lago Oscuro on the Po, where I proposed catching the train to Bologna. It was a beautiful drive through a rich and most pleasing country, the character of the scenery curiously reminding me of the lovely backgrounds to be seen in devotional pictures of the early Italian masters. Among other interesting places we passed through was the ancient town of Rovigo, where we stopped about mid-day to rest and bait the horses. Venetia was sullenly—so it was said—bearing the foreign yoke, but it must be owned that she contrived to do so with the most smiling countenance, and there was no outward trace of galling fetters on all the dimpled

land." Different it was at Venice itself, where empty palaces crumbling into decay, or, if tenanted, turned into Austrian barracks, knots of white uniforms on the square of St. Mark's with a plague-circle drawn, as it were, right round them, a certain oppressive-ness in the very air one breathed—all told an unmistakably painful tale. But in the graceful words of Musset :—

“ Venise est si belle
Qu'une chaîne sur elle
Semble un collier jeté
Sur la beauté !”

I crossed the Po in a ferry-boat in the last rays of daylight, and that night slept at the Hôtel d'Italie at Bologna—a most execrable hostelry, by the way. Good luck would have it that I should next day meet at the station William Gregory¹ and Christopher Sykes, bound, like myself, to Florence. The hours pass quickly in Gregory's company, and by the evening I was comfortably housed in the Piazza del Carmine.

I had been barely a week with my brother at Florence, and was in no immediate hurry to proceed further, when the tidings came of the revolution at Athens, and the fall and flight of King Otho. I could not think of loitering any longer, and determined to get to my post as quickly as I could. A French Messageries steamer was to leave Leghorn that afternoon for Messina, where I would

¹ The late Right Hon. Sir William Gregory, K.C.M.G.



be able to tranship into the direct boat to the Piræus, but I could not catch her except her departure was delayed a couple of hours. I called on M. Poujade, at that time French Consul-General at Florence, and requested, as a great favour, that he would detain the boat by telegraph, which he at once admitted he had power to do, but at the same time, I am sorry to say, declined to do, with an amount of rudeness not altogether unknown among second-class French officials, but which I have never seen equalled. I had to possess my soul in patience a couple of days longer, and then parting from my kind hosts, took a steamer from Leghorn to Genoa—a frightfully bad passage I remember it was—and thence went on again by sea, with Gregory, the same evening to Nice, my object being to catch the next direct Messageries boat leaving Marseilles for the Piræus and Constantinople. My dear old aunt was delighted at my unexpected visit, and after spending twenty-four hours with her, I took the diligence to Les Arcs, and the train thence to Toulon and Marseille.

By the evening of the 1st of November I was fully realising the rolling capabilities of the *Cyd-nus* and had established pleasant relations with a new colleague in the person of M. de Geofroy, the newly appointed First Secretary of the French Legation at Athens, who, by a fortunate chance, was going out to his post like myself. We soon became great friends. On the whole, I am a tolerably

good sailor, but poor Geofroy soon vanished from sight, and only reappeared when we reached Messina and got into smoother waters. Nothing could be more perfect than the rest of our passage, and what between the interest and excitement that grew on us as we drew nearer and nearer to the classic shores for which we were bound, and the amusement afforded us by the tall talk of our numerous Greek fellow-passengers respecting the late events—we had on board several political exiles now hurrying home as fast as they could—time flew by so swiftly that almost before we could realise it we had entered the Gulf of Ægina, and far away in the distance the broken lines of the Acropolis were pointed out to us, bathed in all the glory of the setting autumn sun. We landed at dusk on the 8th of November, and were driven in the dark, along what seemed the dustiest and most interminable of roads, till at last we reached Polizoi's Hôtel d'Orient in the street of Æolus.

CHAPTER XVIII

ATHENS, 1862-1863

I MUST confess that my first impressions of Athens were disappointing. But for the brilliancy and transparency of its atmosphere, the grand outlines of the mountains that surround it, and, above all, of course, the marvellous temple-crowned steep that barred the end of the very street in which I was housed, the general aspect of the third-rate *Residenz-Stadt*—so oddly grafted on a dilapidated Turkish village by the royal Bavarian art-patron who was its founder—appeared to me mean and, worse still, prosaic to the last degree. To most dwellers in Athens the perfect profile of the Attic hill-ranges and the splendour and purity of the Attic sky seem well-worn commonplaces that will not bear repetition, so universally are they accounted to be the redeeming features of perhaps the most tiresome, and certainly the most troublesome, of minor capitals. As for me, I never wearied of their beauties, and of the two neither uneventful nor uninteresting years I passed in Greece, the memories that have remained with me most vividly are perhaps those of early rides all over the wild, barren country, made lovely by its wondrous colouring when

other cue as to their intentions. Under these circumstances the Legation could only remain passive, and simply allow the Alfredist fever to run its course unchecked. The French and Russian Missions, on the other hand¹—and more especially the former, under the guidance of M. Bourée, who was the very type of the *remuant*, somewhat self-seeking agent of his country—meanwhile became most active centres in favour of the candidature of the Duke of Leuchtenberg. It is indeed worthy of remark that a Russo-French understanding as against us—for that is its only imaginable *raison d'être*²—was already foreshadowed in Greece at that comparatively remote period.

All of a sudden, about the middle of December, Lord Russell's silence was broken by two telegrams—in some ways the most surprising it has ever been my lot to decipher. The first announced the departure, on a special mission to the Provisional Government, of my old Vienna colleague, Mr. Elliot, charged, Mr. Scarlett was informed, with proposals that would be highly beneficial to Greece, provided liberal and constitutional institutions should be

¹ It is perhaps superfluous to mention that Great Britain, France, and Russia were at that time the recognised Protecting Powers of Greece. The history of the reign of King Otho is indeed mainly made up of the not all too creditable intrigues and contests of the so-called partisans of these several Powers.

² Written in 1879–80. It need not be pointed out that the existing Dual Alliance was primarily directed against Germany, and not against this country, the political condition of Europe having been profoundly modified, of course, since the events dealt with above.

cession of the Ionian Islands 107

adopted in that country. Mr. Elliot, it was further said in this telegram, would go on from Athens to Constantinople. The second telegram stated that her Majesty's Government were consulting the Powers on the subject of their intention to hand over the Ionian Islands to Greece. We likewise learned—as far as I can tell, at this distance of time, through some private communication to Mr. Scarlett from the Foreign Office, or from the Embassy at Constantinople—that the object of Mr. Elliot's proposed journey to Constantinople was to recommend to the Porte the cession to Greece of Thessaly and Epirus.

With all due respect for the memory of the departed statesman, I must own that I cannot remember any communications that filled me with greater amazement, or seemed to me to point to a policy more prejudicial to our interests. At any rate, we at the Legation were in despair over it. Lord Russell's artless, almost *naïf*, assumption that he could obtain, from the Sultan for the mere asking, the cession of two considerable provinces, was promptly dispelled by unequivocal reports from Erskine, at that time in charge of our Embassy at Constantinople, as to the disastrous effects which such a proposal would assuredly produce if seriously mooted at the Porte. Some inkling of it had, nevertheless, reached the Turkish Government, for Erskine reported that Aali Pasha, in his concern about it, had begged him to telegraph to the

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Ambassador, Sir Henry Bulwer, who was away in Egypt, urging him to return to his post. Erskine at the same time, of his own accord, sent Hugh Macdonnell to Athens with a letter to Mr. Elliot,¹ telling him of the dismay which the report had already caused at Constantinople. And so ended this precious scheme.

As for the cession of the Ionian Islands—and notably of Corfu, with its splendid fortifications, which had to be destroyed—it certainly seemed to me then a very serious political mistake. It was the first step in the course of self-effacement and abdication of prestige and influence so fatally followed for some years by the Liberal Administration, and which now has been happily replaced by a more virile and truly national policy. “*Une puissance qui commence à rendre est une puissance finie*,” was Prince Bismarck’s well-known comment upon this Ionian transaction; but I am anticipating. At the same time it must be allowed that the manœuvring of our Cabinet about the Greek throne, ably seconded by Elliot’s diplomacy, had been extremely adroit. As long as it was necessary Prince Alfred was pitted against the Russian and French candidates, Leuchtenberg and the Duc d’Aumale (the latter being put forward also, though less prominently); but when once the field had been cleared by the election of our own prince, our final candidate was produced in the person of the present king, then Prince William of Denmark.

¹ Sir Hugh Macdonnell, G.C.M.G., late H.M. Envoy at Lisbon.

Before, however, we reached the choice of the Danish Prince, our Legation had to go, as it were, through a severe course of the *Almanach de Gotha*. During something like a fortnight, telegrams came pouring in upon Elliot on the subject of the candidates successively recommended by her Majesty to the Greek nation. The list was in itself a curiosity, and comprised, I remember, the King Consort (Ferdinand) of Portugal, Duke Ernest of Saxe-Coburg, a Prince of Holstein, Prince Leiningen, the Archduke Maximilian, and several others whose names I cannot now call to mind ; and the cyphered messages, coming over the Turkish lines, reached Athens so dreadfully mutilated that we were very hard put to it to make out who were the different illustrious personages proposed for acceptance. Elliot and I often sat late into the night puzzling over these Foreign Office conundrums.

There was a certain amount of excitement about life in this disturbed capital which I at first enjoyed very much ; but one got tired of blatant crowds and discordant "zitos"—even though in honour of an English Prince—and indeed became somewhat ashamed of one's popularity. It was inconvenient, too, after the first novelty had passed away, to have to walk the streets at night, and for that matter, at the earlier stage of the revolution, also by day, with one's hand on the six-shooter in one's coat-pocket. The city was not only full of a lawless military rabble, but some of the political leaders.

like Grivas and Mavromichali, had brought up bands of retainers from distant Acarnania and Maina—the most picturesque cut-throats imaginable, armed to the teeth, and clad in braided jackets and dingy fustanellas—and with these swept the thoroughfares, much as in the Eternal City did the patricians in the worst days of the Republic, or the Orsinis and Colonnas of more modern times. The National Assembly, meeting at Christmas-time, swelled the ranks of these gentry, for many of the provincial members came to town with their clients and dependants, who, while stormy sittings were going on within, strutted about the lobbies and courtyard, or held a parliament of rags and tattered finery in the sunny street outside, squatting on their haunches, with belts full of daggers and pistols, and scowling looks more alarming even than their weapons. In reality harmless fellows enough, I have little doubt, but pestilential with garlic and the vilest tobacco.

On the innumerable *fête* and saints' days of the Greek Church, these worthies had an unpleasant trick of letting off their firelocks in the air in sign of rejoicing, loaded not with blank cartridges, but with ball. Several unfortunate people were killed in this way, while looking out of window, and Miss Scarlett herself once had a narrow escape. Before long, however, there was plenty of gunpowder burned in right earnest at Athens, and on one day of special turmoil and disturbance I remember being

out walking with Eber, the ex-Garibaldian general—at this period correspondent of the *Times* at Athens—and getting into the line of fire of two skirmishing parties, when, to my great relief, this undeniably valiant Magyar gave me an excellent example of prudence by skedaddling as fast as he could. Eber lodged at the same hotel as Geofroy and myself, and we habitually dined together, and afterwards adjourned to his rooms. He had a silver tongue and silky ways, was full of anecdote and information, and a charming musician to boot. Altogether a very accomplished person, with whom I struck up a considerable friendship.

But much the most serious experience I had of Greek civil warfare was the contest that broke out at Athens a few months later, and culminated in some very severe fighting on July 2, 1863. Two opposing military factions, respectively headed by an officer rejoicing in the name of Papadiamantopoulo, and by Colonel Coroneos, afterwards well known in connection with the Cretan insurrection of 1866, came to open hostilities that day. I had left the Hôtel d'Orient by this time, and occupied lodgings in the neighbourhood of the Patissia road, where I was roused quite early in the morning by the loud report of big guns, followed by the rattle of musketry. I dressed with all speed, and going on to the flat roof of the house, at once made out that a field-battery was drawn up on the Place de la Concorde hard by, whence it was pounding away straight down the

Boulevard du Stade in the direction of the Artillery barracks, in which Papadiamantopulo (*Coquin des diamants*, to borrow old Lady Aldborough's free translation of knave of diamonds) had set up his headquarters. From my observatory I could see that the hot, dusty streets all round were thoroughly deserted, the usual traffic having vanished in presence of the murderous strife that was going on. Presently our newly-arrived Attaché, George Jenner, who lived in my neighbourhood, turned up, and after a hurried breakfast, we agreed that our proper course was to make for the Legation. To get there, however, we had to proceed up the greater part of this very Boulevard du Stade, so that we had a lively walk of it, and, although we carefully hugged the houses as we went along in single file, were in the line of fire the whole way, the whirring of the bullets past us being much too close to be pleasant, one shot striking a telegraph-post just over our heads.

The rest of the day we spent at the Legation without precisely knowing how the fight was going on and what turn things were taking. The silence, broken only by the distant discharge of firearms, and the perfect emptiness of the streets on this glorious July day, had an extremely lugubrious effect, but later on in the afternoon it was quite exciting to watch the practice of a couple of howitzers that had been hauled half-way up the hill of Lycabettus. The shells came tearing through the deep blue sky,

apparently straight at us as we stood at the open window, but passing, of course, high over the Legation roof and plunging into the lower part of the town which was held by Coroneos. Presently my friend Geofroy came round to us, having, at considerable risk, run the gauntlet of the fighting, which was sharpest in the immediate neighbourhood of his hotel, where Coroneos was making a most determined attack on the National Bank, almost next door. Scarlett fully discussed the situation with Geofroy, who remained his guest for the rest of the day, and it was agreed that the Ministers of the three Protecting Powers were bound to make some attempt to stop the wanton shedding of blood that was going on. As the French Minister, Bourée, lived some distance out of town at Patissia, Geofroy suggested that towards evening, when the firing would probably slacken, Scarlett should endeavour to communicate with him as well as with the Russian Minister, Bloudoff. Scarlett falling in with this proposal, Geofroy and I sat down and drew up the draft of a joint note, to be signed by the three Ministers, proposing an immediate suspension of hostilities, and advising both contending parties to submit their differences to the National Assembly pending the arrival of the newly elected king. Thus the afternoon wore away.

Just before sunset we heard the sound of wheels, and, looking out, saw a string of half-a-dozen carriages rapidly approaching, with the Union J

flying from the foremost of them. They drew up at the Legation door, Captain Hillyar, of H.M.S. *Queen*, two-decker, jumped out, and with him a guard of some thirty marines he had brought up from the Piræus on hearing how serious matters looked. It was very satisfactory to hear the ring of the rifles on the pavement as the men grounded arms at the word of command given in English. The marines were quartered in the yard and garden of the Legation, and we went to dinner in a much more comfortable frame of mind. In the evening the firing entirely ceased, and Scarlett with Geofroy and myself sallied forth in quest of Count Bloudoff, who lived in the square immediately facing the Royal Palace, and must have passed an unpleasant day, for his house was riddled with bullets. Although habitually disinclined to act in concert with his colleagues, he agreed on this occasion to everything that was suggested. The most important point settled with him was that a detachment of his sailors (for he, too, had received a garrison that evening) and some of our own marines should at once take possession of the National Bank. This was fortunately accomplished without opposition, and we then all got into Scarlett's carriage and drove out to Patissia, where a final council was held in M. Bourée's house. The upshot of it was that the Russian and French First Secretaries, Prince Léon Gagarine and Geofroy, together with myself, were charged first to call upon the President of the National Assembly in the name of our chiefs, and,

having obtained his concurrence to our proposal for an armistice, then to seek out the chiefs of the two contending factions and lay it before them. We were further to give formal notice to them that a mixed guard of sailors and marines from the Russian, French, and English ships would be placed over the National Bank till order and tranquillity were completely restored.

We started on this mission at about nine o'clock at night in an open carriage with the colours of the three Protecting Powers and a white flag of truce flying from the box-seat. The President of the National Assembly (Moraïtini, if I mistake not) received us with great manifestations of joy, and at once agreed to everything we had to propose. The poor man was, in fact, in a great fright, and only too glad of our intervention. From him we went on to the former royal stables, now turned into artillery barracks, where, after some parleying, we obtained admittance to the doughty Papadiamantopoulo, who also turned out to be reasonable enough, and readily signed the declaration of truce we had brought with us. I suspect he had been having rather the worst of the fight, and, for that reason, did not demur to handing over the bank to our care. Finally, we drove down to the very rough headquarters occupied by Coroneos in the lower suburbs, on the road to the Piræus, nearly opposite the Cerameicus cemetery discovered of late years. We found this redoubtable chieftain in-

stalled in a kind of shanty not far from the Botanical Gardens, and, although in a sulky mood, still not unwilling to sign. When he had done so, however, we took a parting shot at him by telling him of the occupation of the bank, and warning him that it was now under our protection. I have seldom seen a man look more savage than he did when he heard this; and no wonder, for he felt he was now balked of the main prize he had been contending for. His face was convulsed with rage, and he said something extremely impudent about foreign interference in Greek affairs which I remember I answered very sharply. Thus ended our mission, and, with it, the most eventful birthday I ever passed.

From that time forward we became answerable for the peace and order of the town till the arrival of the king, who had been elected in March, and was expected in the course of the autumn. Scarlett had telegraphed, on the outbreak of the fighting, to Admiral Smart at Malta, and in a few days the whole Mediterranean Squadron, composed of half-a-dozen line-of-battle ships, was at the Piræus. These, with one or two French and Russian vessels, placed so powerful a force at the disposal of the Ministers that they next proceeded to insist upon every Greek soldier being sent out of the town, threatening, in case of refusal, to land guns and men and occupy it themselves. I well remember how the unfortunate Greek Minister for Foreign Affairs for the time being, M. Calligas, was sum-

moned to our Legation and informed of this decision in stern language by the assembled Protecting trio. Of course he could only bow his head and submit, and thus we were well rid for a season of the demoralized remnant of the Greek army, and no longer in daily fear of disturbance.

After this digression I will return to something like a sequence of events. In January, only a few weeks after my arrival, I accompanied Scarlett and his charming daughter (now Lady Walsham) on a ten-days' voyage in that fine old two-decker the *Queen*. The Scarledds took with them two remarkably pretty Greek young ladies of the name of Carpouni, who, with their father, had sought refuge at the Legation during the first wild days of the revolution. Carpouni was a devoted Othonist, and his wife, a Bavarian lady who had come to Athens with Queen Amélie, had been a great favourite at Court and the Queen's special *confidante*, so that the whole family were objects of popular dislike, and scarcely deemed themselves in safety after the departure of their royal patrons, whom Madame Carpouni herself had followed into exile. Very scant justice has been done to the memory of Queen Amélie, who was a remarkable woman and, as well as her less-gifted consort, sincerely attached to Greece, and indeed strongly imbued with those delusive dreams of a resurrection of national greatness and glory which it is hard not to forgive the Greeks, however fatal they have been to the sub-

stantial welfare and rational development of their country. Much ridicule has been cast on the King and Queen for adopting the national costume, which was more generally worn in those days, and identifying themselves with many of the national habits and prejudices. The royal Teutonic couple, disguised *en Palicare et Palicaresse*, were, no doubt, a sight to raise a smile, but beneath this harmless though ill-judged masquerading they harboured feelings of the deepest devotion to their adopted country, and an earnest desire to serve it to the best of their ability. The Queen herself was an ardent Philhellene, and during her anxious, troubled reign no doubt found relief from much vexation and humiliation in her passionate faith in the *grande idée* which would at no distant day restore the splendours of Hellenism and seat her consort and herself on the throne of Byzantium.

A characteristic instance of this subject being always uppermost in her thoughts was given me by Boudouris, who at the time of my stay in Greece was one of the cleverest and most active of Greek politicians. Boudouris had been partly educated in England, spoke English perfectly, and was constantly at the Legation, to which he made himself very useful by bringing the last news of the day. He has since held office on several occasions, sat as Deputy for Poros for some years, and is a brilliant specimen of the modern Athenian. Boudouris, like most of his fellow-politicians, had been in opposi-

tion to the Court, and, after being greatly in favour with Queen Amélie, had incurred her displeasure by some cutting remark he had permitted himself. A ball was about to be given at the Palace, and his friends taunting him with the sorry figure he would make at it now that the royal hostess had withdrawn her countenance from him, Boudouris audaciously laid a wager that he would compel her Majesty, one of whose habitual partners he had been, to dance with him on that occasion. The Queen was passionately fond of dancing, and her balls, in true German style, always ended with a *cotillon*, in which she herself took part. Boudouris laid his plans accordingly. When the well-known figure came round which consists of two men being taken up to one of the ladies who has to choose between the flowers, animals, or other things whose names they may have assumed, he contrived to be led up to the Queen with another man. The lady who had charge of him made a profound curtsey and asked : " Which does your Majesty prefer—Thessaly or Macedonia ? " The Queen, without hesitation, replied, " Macedonia," and promptly found herself twirling round the room with the peccant and exulting Boudouris ! I need not explain that, when given the choice between the two coveted provinces, she had at once named that which lay the farthest on the road to Constantinople. Poor Queen Amélie ! The buildings of her experimental farm near Menidi, and the various charitable and educational establish

ments she founded, still remain to show how actively she sought to benefit the country. That her efforts, and those of her weak but well-intentioned husband, are now rightly appreciated by a select few at least, was proved to me, many years afterwards, during my last sojourn at Athens. A Greek statesman who was then in office, and is certainly one of the most straightforward of men, told me that he had spent the summer in Southern Germany. "When there," he said, "I expressly went on a pilgrimage to Bamberg and stood by the tomb of King Otho. If ever a man truly loved Greece he did, and he meant thoroughly well by her."

Thanks to our three young ladies and to the hospitality of Captain Hillyar of the *Queen*, we had a delightful cruise on glassy seas and under the sunniest of skies, visiting first Poros and its ancient disused arsenal, and then going across to Nauplia, whence we made excursions to Argos and Mycenæ. Our party also included Sir Percy and Lady Shelley, whose yacht, the *Flirt*, we had in tow most of the time. The only incident to mar the pleasure of our expedition occurred at Nauplia, where an unfortunate seaman of the *Queen* was killed in a brawl with some native boatmen. There was nothing in the least political about this untoward occurrence, but, to impress the Greeks with the value we attached to the lives of our men, we buried the poor fellow on shore next day with great pomp, and Hillyar, who was much incensed by the

murder, gave all Nauplia a thorough scare by beating to quarters in the dead of the night. Any one who has had the doubtful pleasure of being on board a man-of-war during this operation will realise the effect it must have produced on the wretched Nauplians, who, roused out of their slumbers by our broadsides, no doubt thought we were bombarding them in retaliation for the crime committed the day before.

There never can have been much society at Athens. At this time, with the exception of various members of the Soutzo family and their connections, there was little beyond such as we made up *entre collègues*. Of our own Legation we had George Jenner,¹ then quite a youth, and later on Graham Sandford, who was chiefly remarkable for his good looks. With the latter, by the way, I tried the doubtful experiment of sharing a house and its expenses, but did not find it answer—as, indeed, I fancy it seldom does. The Prussian Chargé d’Affaires, fat Count Keyserling, was very amusing, but *très mauvaise langue*—a striking instance of the fallacy which credits very stout people with exceptional good-nature and benevolence. In spite of his size he was extremely fond of dancing, which made the caustic Russian Envoy say of him: “Le Comte Keyserling a la circonférence d’un ballon, mais il en a aussi la légereté.” As for M. Bourée, the French Minister, no one could be more entertaining than he. Unfortunately he was an inveterate *faiseur*

¹ Afterward her Majesty’s Minister at Guatemala.

and intriguer, and was strongly marked with what a witty Belgian diplomatic friend of mine used to call “la tache Consulaire, la seule ineffaçable.” The Italian Minister, the arch-revolutionist Mamiani, lived in the greatest retirement; we saw more of his clever and talented secretary, Count Joannini, whom I was destined to meet again some years later under very different circumstances. But much the most interesting and important person of our small set was Comtesse Bloudoff, the wife of the Russian Envoy—beautiful indeed in those days and full of charm and cleverness. Her *salon* in the corner house of the Place de la Constitution—a delightful bit of the cultured Western world from which one felt so much cut off at Athens at the time I speak of—was a real god-send to us all. How pleasant are my memories of balmy evenings spent on her balcony looking over the Palace square, evenings

When the sweet wind did gently kiss the trees
And they did make no noise—

when the scent of orange blossoms, mingling with the harmonies of a full choir of nightingales, was wafted over from the royal gardens, while above Lycabettus the moon sailed high and clear through the translucent Attic sky! During the brief—all too brief—spring-time, while the plains round the city were still fully clad in tenderest verdure—the horses and mules standing shoulder high in the green barley—and the olive trees, which had not yet received their dull coating of dust, cast the

delicate tracery of their shade across the glare of the white country roads, the charming Comtesse would take long drives with her lovely little girls all round the neighbourhood, resting at times in the Botanical Gardens, which stand where once flourished the groves of the Academy, or wandering by the sea-shore at Phalerum; and wherever she went, a knot of us, of whom I was not the least faithful, went too. Dull indeed to us would have been existence at Athens without her winning presence and kindly welcome.

In August the torrid heat drove me to seek for a while the cool breezes of the Bosphorus, and I then for the first time became acquainted with the wonders of Constantinople. Here I found at the Embassy Edward Herbert, and got to know that remarkable *original*, and most talented and kind-hearted of would-be cynics, Henry Labouchere. Here, too, I met my future colleague, the "Irish Arab," Lionel Moore, in those days full of life and health and spirits. Doing the Mosque and other sights one broiling hot day¹ with Herbert, I witnessed the fire by which the greater portion of the Old Seraglio was burned to the ground. We had just left Stamboul, and were riding across the Galata Bridge, on our way back to Missirie's, when the rush past us of a lot of half-naked savages dragging a wretched hand fire-engine, and wildly yelling as they went, made us pause and turn. There, right behind

¹ August 12, 1863.

us, we saw the magnificent grove of ancient cypresses, in the grounds we had passed through barely a couple of hours before, all alight and looking like so many pyramids of fire. Behind this crackling screen of writhing, tortured trunks and branches—almost human they seemed in their agony—the kiosks and detached dwelling-houses that made up the Palace were blazing fiercely, while the volumes of smoke rising heavily in the breathless, sweltering air hung in lurid masses over the whole promontory of Seraï Bournou. It was both imposing and terrible to see these walls—perhaps the most deeply blood-stained in the world—wrapped in their final fiery doom. The flames made short work of them, and before evening a great portion—fortunately the least interesting historically—of the vast, straggling Palace was reduced to shapeless ruins.

Very shortly after this I returned to Athens, where nothing of special note occurred up to the King's arrival. I brought back with me from Constantinople a Bagdad pony—a very good-looking grey—which I had bought of Labouchere. Although slightly gone in the fore-legs, like so many of that breed, he made a very fair hack and served me well in my long, delightful, early-morning rides.

Politically, everything remained quiet till the royal landing on October 30 (1863), on which occasion the Athenians, indeed all the Greeks, went wild with joy and excitement, and gave their new sovereign a truly enthusiastic welcome. For

several days the city was given up entirely to public rejoicings, of which the most remarkable feature—a sight indeed to be remembered—was some fireworks let off immediately behind the columns of the Temple of Jupiter, while the heights of the Acropolis above were simultaneously illuminated with Bengal lights. The effect was exceedingly fine, however fairly it might be criticised on strictly æsthetic grounds as unworthy of such classic surroundings. But, although everything went merrily as a marriage-bell, it was impossible not to feel compassion for the boy-king whose lot was cast among so turbulent and fickle a race as the Greeks. He was, and looked, so young and artless that the experiment seemed to all of us questionable and indeed highly hazardous, and although it has answered far better than the most sanguine had any warrant to hope, even now the rashness of the conception appears to me scarcely compatible with true statesmanship. I can well remember how strongly that impression came home to me and others the day on which the youthful sovereign took the oath to the Constitution in the National Assembly. The sight of this slight, delicate stripling, standing alone amidst a crowd of callous, unscrupulous politicians, many of whom had been steeped to the lips in treason, and swearing to observe, as he has so faithfully done, the most unworkable of charters, from which nearly every safeguard, beginning with a Second Chamber,

had been studiously eliminated—without, I regret to say, any opposition on the part of our Government, at that time all-powerful in Greece—was indeed painful and saddening. It is true that our Danish Telemachus had brought with him, as mentor and political adviser, a Count Sponneck, who had played some part in the public affairs of his country, and had a great reputation for prudence and sagacity. I had occasion to see a good deal of Count Sponneck during the journey I afterwards made with the king to the Ionian Islands, and must confess that I was much disappointed in him, and, more especially, struck by his phenomenal want of tact.

At this time I was much engrossed by personal worries, into the particulars of which it is needless to enter. Nor were matters improved by my stupidly slipping up one morning on the marble floor of the vestibule at the Legation and coming down with such force as to break my right arm. This occurred at the end of November, and when I was well enough to get about freely I applied for leave of absence, and resolved to go to Italy for a change. On January 2, 1864, I went on board the Messageries boat at the Piræus, again having for a companion Geofroy, who, this time, was leaving Athens for good. The steamer had just come in from Constantinople, and as I paced her deck, taking stock of the fellow-passengers with whom I was to be thrown as far as Messina, I soon singled out a tall, good-

looking, middle-aged Englishman accompanied by a young lady—evidently his daughter. All I noticed at first was that she was very fair and slight, and extremely graceful, as well as *parfaitement bien mise*. I speedily got into conversation with the father, who, it appeared, had just been engaged on important railway business at Constantinople. He had found out who I was from seeing me brought on board by a man-of-war boat of the *Revenge*, and mentioned to me Lionel Moore and other Therapia acquaintances. While we were conversing, the sound of a piano, very skilfully played, reached us from the deck saloon, and presently there came some slight Italian melody—one of Campana's, I think—sung with exquisite taste and feeling by a most lovely mezzo-soprano voice of unusual compass.

On the first two days of our journey we had a perfectly smooth sea, but soon got into so thick a fog that we had to anchor at Poros for the night. Music made the hours fly in the most delightful way, and even after doubling Cape Matapan, and getting into rougher waters, I well remember how I held on to the piano, when joining my new and charming friend in some duet—she, meanwhile, achieving miracles of equilibrium on the music-stool—till at last the violent lurching of the vessel drove us to safer seats. Messina was reached all too soon, and there for the time I had my last look at the bright, winsome face which many years after came to gladden my life and home for good.

CHAPTER XIX

THE CESSION OF THE IONIAN ISLANDS, 1864

I HAD never seen Naples, and, when I got there the following day from Messina, was at once so fascinated by its beauties and its exuberance of life and colour that I felt in no sort of hurry to leave it again. Even in mid-winter it seemed to me so enchanting a place that I lingered on for six weeks, and saw out the Carnival festivities. I was most fortunate in finding here one of my oldest acquaintances in the Duchesse de Sant' Arpino—the Leila Locke of my boyhood in Paris, where we were taught dancing together at her mother's house by M. Fauchet, an old-fashioned *maitre de danse* of a type long since extinct. My little fairy partner of those days was now the prettiest and smartest of Neapolitan great ladies, and nothing could exceed the kindness and hospitality I met with at her beautiful house on the Riviera di Chiaja all through my stay. At Naples I also found several men I had known well in Paris and Vienna, such as the Duc de Forli, who afterwards lived in London for many years, and Ernesto Dentice. Dentice—or Prince Frasso, as he is now called—was married to a charming Austrian lady—one of the Choteks

—and he and his wife made me most welcome. At their house I frequently met the lovely little Duchesse de Lavello and Princess Louise Dolgorouky, *née* Vulcano, whom I was to see again later on at St. Petersburg.

I found Neapolitan society altogether very pleasant. It was remarkable for the number of unusually handsome women who adorned it, and this year, for the first time since the fall of the Bourbon dynasty, efforts were made to enliven the winter by some of the old Carnival amusements. The Corso on Toledo during the last days of the Carnival was to me an entirely new experience of unbridled Southern fun and frolic, and a wonderful sight of its kind. On this occasion it was made exceptionally picturesque by a number of huge masquerading cars, decorated, with great splendour and artistic taste, by the opposing Bourbonist and Liberal factions which then divided the society of the dethroned capital. Prince Humbert, who was holding court here for his father, was in one of these cars with the officers of his household, while others had been organised by Frasso, Forli, Sant' Arpino, and other leaders of the *jeunesse dorée* of the place. Forli's car was much the most amusing and original of the lot, being manned by eight young *élégants* dressed up as babies with bibs and *bourrelets*, or padded caps, and Troïsi, the popular composer of the day, as the old nurse to look after them. I had been asked to join this car, but my right arm, still very

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stiff after my accident, would have been no good in throwing the *confetti* ammunition, so I had to content myself with watching the marvellously gay, animated scene from a window in Toledo, in very pleasant company. Prince Humbert, then only in his nineteenth year, and placed more or less in charge of my old Turin acquaintance, General de la Marmora, gave a very pretty ball at the splendid *Palazzo Reale*, at which I distinctly recollect the effect produced by that lovely scion of the two great Doria and Talbot houses, the young Duchesse de Rignano, now Duchesse Massimo. Between these diversions and the comforts of an excellent and very exclusive club which had been recently opened in the Strada di Chiaja, varied by excursions to Pompeii and other places in the neighbourhood, time passed quickly, and I was very loth to leave my rooms at the Vittoria in the second week of Lent. I went on to Rome, where, to my shame be it spoken, I only passed a week. I would gladly have remained longer, but was impatiently expected both at Florence and at Nice, and could not afford to spend any more time on the road. The cold at Rome was quite exceptional for that latitude. There had been a hard frost for some days, and the great Trevi Fountain, hung all over with huge icicles, had a most striking effect. I found a good many friends passing the winter here—the Rokebys, Baillie Cochranes, Percy Anderson of the Foreign Office, and others—but had no time to attempt much in the

way of sight-seeing. I have never been at Rome since, and the Eternal City, with all its marvels and treasures, unfortunately remains a sealed book to me to this day.

On reaching Florence at the end of February, I heard from my brother such alarming accounts of my aunt, Mrs. Arabin, that I resolved to go on to her at Nice at once. A terribly cold journey I had in the diligence across the Apennines. It snowed heavily the whole way, but we managed to get into Pracchia in time for the evening train to Bologna, which was due there about eleven o'clock, and was in connection with the night mail to Alexandria, Turin, Genoa, &c. We left Pracchia shortly after six o'clock, and went on, very slowly, for an hour or so, when we suddenly came to a complete standstill. We passed the best part of the night like this, the heavy drifts entirely blocking the line, and only towards four o'clock in the morning did we move on again, reaching Bologna after seven. I had, fortunately, with me a sandwich-box and sherry-flask, the contents of which I shared with a young English couple on their wedding tour, and thus helped to keep them alive through the bitter night. Of course we missed the mail-train, and were detained the whole day at Bologna, where the snow in the streets was piled up along the houses in heaps some four feet high. Scarcely anywhere out of Russia, where one is thoroughly sheltered from it, do I remember seeing such severe weather.

I found my aunt laid up with an alarming attack of bronchitis, and was thankful I was there to look after her. She had so excellent a constitution, however, that she recovered in a wonderfully short time, and was quite herself again by the middle of April, when I left her to return to Florence. I had liked my six weeks' stay at Nice very well. I found there, as usual, a number of pleasant people, among others the Ellisons, the young Duc de Mouchy, and my old friend Geraldine Harris. But what I most enjoyed was going for long rides in the early spring, when the country round Nice looks its loveliest, with Mrs. Hartmann and her sister, Miss Steiner, the very attractive daughters of a remarkable old Alsatian millionaire, who, by his shrewdness and industry, had become one of the leading manufacturers of Lancashire. If I am not mistaken he partly owed his wealth to some important discovery he had made in the composition of aniline dyes. Miss Steiner not long afterwards married my very good friend the Marquis de Jaucourt, and I have had the pleasure of visiting her since in her luxurious home in Paris. At this time young Mouchy *s'etait mis sur les rangs*, and I confess that I too found her quite charming. But *cui bono?* I had to take myself off, my leave having nearly expired, and my brother looking forward to my paying him the visit I had before been obliged to curtail. Even now my stay at Florence was to be short, for I received orders to

return at once to Athens, and take charge of the Legation between the departure of Scarlett and the arrival of his successor, Erskine. I sailed from Leghorn on the 7th of May and landed at the Piræus on the 12th. Two days later the Scarplets left, much to my regret, and I moved into the Legation House, where I made myself very comfortable for the time with Eric Farquhar—an extremely nice fellow, who was lost all too soon to his friends and to the service, dying of typhoid fever a few years afterwards at Peking.

The protracted negotiations for ceding the administration of the Ionian Islands to Greece had now come to an end, and the arrangements for handing them over to their new masters were all but completed. On the first occasion I had of seeing Count Sponneck after my return, he informed me that the king would shortly go and take possession of the islands in person, and that his Majesty hoped that I, as well as the French and Russian Chargés d'Affaires, as representing the three Protecting Powers (by a fortunate chance both Bourée and Bloudoff were absent on leave), would accompany him on the occasion. I telegraphed home for instructions, and was told to accept the invitation and take my passage in the *Revenge*, the flagship of Admiral Yelverton, then stationed at the Piræus. My colleagues, Vicomte Amelot de Chaillou (next to Edmond de Polignac the most amusing Frenchman I ever knew) and Prince Léon Gagarine, received

instructions similar to mine, and we all prepared with great alacrity for an expedition which, in addition to its political interest, promised to be delightful, as it indeed proved in every sense. The young king left Athens the last week in May, and travelled overland, by Corinth and Argos, to Tripolitza and Sparta, making a triumphal progress through the Peloponnesus, and being met at Calamata by the corvette *Hellas*. It was arranged that we should rendezvous with his Majesty at Navarino, and I accordingly went on board the *Revenge* on the morning of June 1, taking George Jenner with me and leaving Farquhar to look after the Legation at Athens.

I greatly regret that I should have kept no daily notes of a journey which was so well worth recording in all its details, and that I am thus entirely thrown on my memory—which, fortunately, happens to be a fairly tenacious one—for an account of it. At Navarino we found the *Magicienne*, carrying the flag of the French Admiral d'Aboville, and the Russian frigate *Oleg*. We were soon joined by the royal corvette and at once left for the north, steaming in due order of naval etiquette: the *Hellas* leading, our ship following astern on her port, and the Frenchman on her starboard quarter, while the Russian brought up the rear. About noon the following day we slowed down, and presently cast anchor in the Bay of Katacolo, where we found that magnificent specimen of the old three-decker, the

Duke of Marlborough, 130 guns, waiting for us. She carried the last battalion of our troops withdrawn from Corfu, and had Sir Henry Storks, the Lord High Commissioner of the islands, on board. We had barely cast anchor when a State barge flying the Ionian standard left her side and steered for the *Hellas*, on reaching which the colours were struck and carried on board by Sir Henry himself, who laid them at the feet of the king—a somewhat theatrical piece of display it seemed to me. The yacht *Undine*, with the Duke of Sutherland and Lord Sefton, was likewise here, and in the evening there was a banquet on board the royal corvette in honour of all these distinguished people. Long after dark the *Marlborough* steamed slowly past us on her way to Malta, her three tiers of ports lighted up, and affording a beautiful but at the same time, to my mind, saddening sight, for she bore away with her the last vestige of our dominion in the islands.

Early on the morning of June 6 we were off Corfu, and there was a great stir throughout the combined squadron in view of the landing of the king. Fortunately, we three foreign representatives were not expected to take part in the ceremonies attending his Majesty's reception, so that, going on shore as private individuals in plain clothes, we had excellent opportunities of observing the conduct and demeanour of the Corfiotes on this memorable occasion. I have never seen crowds behave better, though they were very excusably



wild with enthusiasm, and manifested their joy in truly Southern demonstrative fashion. Distasteful as was to me the occasion of all these rejoicings, I must own that the decoration and illumination of the Esplanade were quite beautiful in their way, and that I passed a delightful evening wandering in and out of the dense throng in the company of de Robeck, Yelverton's nephew and flag-lieutenant, and his very pretty wife, a somewhat rustic, but most taking, graceful creature he had brought home with him from the Cape. I had rooms at the St. George's Hotel, but dined every day with the king at the Palace, as did also my French and Russian colleagues. After an early dinner, his Majesty used by turns to take one of us out driving all about the lovely neighbourhood in a mail-phaeton, with a very good-looking pair of horses he had brought out from England, and on our return from these drives he would keep whichever of us had been thus honoured till late in the evening, talking and smoking on the Palace balcony. Thanks to these long *têtes-à-têtes*, I speedily got to know the young sovereign as one seldom does know crowned heads, and this closer acquaintance called forth in me feelings of the most sincere respect and attachment.

King George was at this time barely eighteen and a half, and his countenance bore an impress of such extreme youth and candour that the excitable Corfiote peasantry at once hailed him as *Hagios*

Georgios, or Saint George. Although still boyish in many ways, and with a flow of animal spirits that made it sometimes difficult for us, his daily companions, to maintain the respectful reserve and gravity due to his regal station, he already showed much of that simple dignity and charm of manner which, together with her transcendent beauty, have made his sister, the Princess of Wales, the beloved of all England. Even at this time it was possible to discern in him the sterling qualities which have enabled him to weather the many difficulties that beset his Government during the Cretan insurrection, again during the storm produced by the Oropos murders, and, finally, through this last most serious crisis in Eastern affairs.¹ But his truthfulness and straightforwardness, united to considerable firmness of character and high personal courage, at once assured to him an exceptional position with his subjects, while his powerful dynastic connections subsequently made him an invaluable link between Europe and his country at those conjunctures when Greece stood in greatest disfavour with public opinion in the West. I sometimes doubt whether the Greeks sufficiently realise the extent to which they are indebted to their king for the consideration and sympathy that have ever been shown to them. At the same time, the young sovereign early borrowed a leaf out of the book of King Leopold I. of Belgium by letting—to quote that sagacious sove-

¹ The events of 1885-86.

reign's well-known jest—his subjects clearly understand that he always "kept a portmanteau ready packed," and was prepared to leave them at any moment if ever they should make it too evident that they desired to be rid of him.

At the period at which I was honoured with his intimacy King George strongly showed the marks of the admirable home influences from which he had only just been removed. He had a holy horror of all vice and deceit, and I remember being both touched and amused one evening by his confiding to me his determination to marry as early as possible in order to be placed at once out of reach of the many risks and temptations to which he knew he was certain to be exposed. Very sensible and praiseworthy this, and in striking contrast with the traditions of some royal houses. It is difficult to say whether the young sovereign harboured any ambitious views as to future territorial aggrandisement at this the dawn of his reign. His guide and mentor, Count Sponneck, on the other hand, while loudly disclaiming all sympathy with the *grande idée*, now and then betrayed aspirations which it would have been difficult to distinguish from that darling Utopia of the Greek race. To be quite fair, it was not to be expected that any ruler of Greece should altogether escape the allurements of so gorgeous a dream as that of a restored Greek Empire with its seat on the Bosphorus. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the young

monarch was, and has remained, too strongly imbued with a sense of his obligations to the Power that placed him on the throne and endowed him with the brightest jewel of his crown, actively to favour schemes at variance with the well-known principles which then governed British policy in the East.

Fresh as he was from Marlborough House, King George very laudably desired to place his household on a certain footing of refinement and smartness, and in this respect he himself, with his gracious manners and neat appearance, set off by extremely well-made clothes, furnished an admirable example to his *entourage*; but he had some difficulty at first with his rough Greek aides-de-camp, who had never worn anything but uniform (which he personally disliked), and did not precisely shine in evening attire. I remember his making us all rather uncomfortable one day by administering a sharp rebuke across the table to some one of his suite for his untidy appearance at dinner. Amelot and I did him, I believe, a good turn at this time by advising him to take into his service M. Rodostamos, who had been aide-de-camp to Sir Henry Storks, and was a gentlemanlike man accustomed to good society. His Majesty shortly afterwards appointed him his Maréchal du Palais. Rodostamos made himself very useful to us in helping to arrange a kind of *fête champêtre* we gave the king at a lovely spot on the sea-shore not very far from the

town of Corfu. My very good friend, Sir Henry Drummond-Wolff, my acquaintance with whom dates from this time—he had been secretary to the Lord High Commissioner for some years—has often spoken to me since of the success of this entertainment, and of the high favour in which we appeared to stand with our royal guest. This, and a great reception held at the Palace—partly in honour of that designing lady, Princess Darinka of Montenegro, the widow of Prince Danilo, who had come down from her mountains on some errand of intrigue—were the only festivities of any account that took place during our three-weeks' stay at Corfu.

The brightest pictures, however, have their shadows, and I recollect that some of the most distinguished Corfiotes, men who had held high office under us—Sir Peter Brailos Armeni among others, whom I saw a good deal of—expressed to me regret that the king's sojourn in the island should not be turned to greater account by his Majesty and his adviser in studying the condition and requirements of its inhabitants. Of course, the extreme youth and want of experience of King George more than explained his not at that time applying himself closely to State business. No sovereign has since shown greater political tact and understanding, or has more thoroughly identified himself with the interests of his people. As regards Count Sponneck, on the other hand, the remarks made were in some measure deserved. That sin-

gular statesman was then entirely engrossed in manipulating the Corfu constituency as he fondly imagined, in view of the impending elections; but his too transparent coquettings with the extreme Radical party, and, most of all, his habitual disparagement of everything that was Greek, were not likely to contribute to the popularity of his royal master. He had a particular knack of saying the wrong thing, which, with so quick-witted a people as the Greeks, had disastrous effects and made him many enemies. One ludicrous instance of this regrettable absence of tact I may here relate. Admiral Yelverton, who, like all of us, was much attached to the young king, made some remark to his counsellor as to the advisability of his Majesty devoting some time each day to serious study in order to fit himself for his kingly duties. "It is true, my dear Admiral," was the reply, "that the king has yet much to learn. But, then, please remember that he was brought up for the navy." Yelverton bowed and smiled, and then looked at me in comical astonishment. Before very long Count Sponneck made his position in Greece untenable and had to return to his native land.

With our departure from Corfu on June 25 began much the most interesting and amusing part of our tour. We touched successively at Paxo and Ithaca, at Santa Maura, whence we made an excursion to Missolonghi, at Argostoli in Cephalonia, at Zante, and finally at Cerigo, getting back to Athens

on July 5. Our ten-days' cruise among these beautiful islands, favoured by lovely weather and unbroken sunshine, and the truly splendid reception given to the youthful sovereign, had quite an intoxicating effect even upon us sober outsiders. To borrow from an account of it in one of my despatches: "Everywhere his Majesty has met with a welcome which, in the people, showed itself in madly excited multitudes thronging his path and standing for hours shouting under his windows, apparently never tired of watching for a glimpse of his countenance, while, on the part of the upper classes, it took the more costly form of a prodigal display of triumphal arches, illuminations, and fireworks."

It was, indeed, a journey not to be forgotten, and, for us who were in closest intimacy with the Court, had a specially attractive and humorous side, inasmuch as it enabled us to see the central figure and object of all these manifestations and of this striking outburst of popular enthusiasm as he really was—that is, a simple, unspoilt lad, full of fun and spirits, and, on occasion, not above a practical joke or two at our expense. In fact, leaving aside its important historical character, this summer junketing in the suite of our crowned "middy" is about the most curious chapter of my reminiscences, and, could I but recount them, certain of its incidents would seem taken from the realms of burlesque rather than from the experiences of a staid diplomatist on an official tour.

The first important island we visited after leaving Corfu, and landing for an hour or two at Ithaca and Paxo, was Santa Maura, and here I acquired proof—the only one afforded me during our cruise—of the existence of very bitter feelings against us, and these on the part of one of the leading deputies of that island. At these larger places, where we usually made a stay of two or three days, the king took up his quarters on shore, the best houses available being prepared for his reception. Here at Santa Maura he was lodged at the former Residency, only just vacated by Colonel Sebright, or, as he preferred styling himself, Baron d'Everton, an officer who had administered the island with much credit. We were all lounging about the yard of this house after luncheon, waiting, in the shade of a huge palm tree, for horses to take us on an excursion in the neighbourhood, when one of the king's guests, M. Valaority, a considerable landowner of the place, who had, it seems, some reputation as a poet, told us, in reply to some remark about this magnificent specimen of Southern vegetation, that there was a story current of a snake having made its nest among its tangled, wide-spreading roots. Whereupon Count Sponneck, *mit gewohnter Plumpheit*, said: "Let us hear some of the melody of your verse and surely the snake will be enticed out of its hiding-place." "J'ai fait l'autre jour un poème," replied M. Valaority, with marked emphasis, "dans lequel j'ai dit que le dernier des serpents était sorti de

cette maison!" Nothing could be in worse taste than this unprovoked sally uttered in the presence of Admiral Yelverton and myself. An awkward silence followed, but the king made no secret of his annoyance, and, taking M. Valaority aside, insisted on his at once apologising to me—a disagreeable task of which he acquitted himself with sufficiently good grace. "I shall never allow any one," the king then said to me, "to speak disparagingly before me of a country to which I owe so much." I have related this slight incident at some length because it was the only unpleasant occurrence of the whole journey, and was the occasion of so cordial an outburst on the part of the young monarch.

From Santa Maura we went for a very long ride on the mainland as far as the small town of Vonitza on the Ambracian Gulf, facing the coasts of Epirus, and looking over the fair waters where the fate of Rome and of empire was decided on that memorable day¹ when "the ribald-rid nag of Egypt" hoisted sail and fled "i' the midst of the fight," followed by "the noble ruin of her magic, Antony." It is to be hoped that some of us were duly interested in these classic reminiscences, but I must own that the general aspect of our cavalcade while passing through these famous regions was that of a parcel of Sunday riders rather than of a dignified escort attending on a crowned head; the young monarch himself, who was mounted, I remember, on a

¹ The Battle of Actium.

spanking black mule, challenging us by turns to run races with him, to the great distress of some of my excellent colleagues, who did not feel exactly at home on the rough, hard-mouthed *agoyate* ponies that had been provided for them. From Santa Maura, too, we went by sea to Missolonghi, where we landed and visited the dreary house in which poor Byron breathed his last, and the neglected spot where his remains lay until taken home, and which is now—or rather was then—appropriately marked by the iron skeleton of the printing-press he had brought out with him from England.

Speaking of Byron and Missolonghi reminds me that our Vice-Consul in that dismal place, at the time of our visit there, was a gentleman of the name of Black, who had been an officer in our army. A few months before I had met at dinner, at the Legation at Athens, a stoutish old lady, very badly dressed, and of that distinctly Levantine type with which all visitors to the East are familiar, and, on being introduced to her, had been told she was the wife of this same Black. I sat next to her, and found her as uninteresting as she was unattractive. After dinner, when she had departed, Scarlett somewhat maliciously asked me what I had thought of my neighbour, and then, to my utter amazement, informed me that this poor old creature, with no trace left of even ordinary good looks, was no less a person than the original Maid of Athens! *Zoe mou sas agapo!* I confess

that I rather resented not having been told this beforehand by my excellent chief, as I thus lost a chance of seeking to discover whether, under this sadly commonplace, comfortable exterior, there still lay hidden away any of the charm that had inspired the well-known love-song. But even on this subject, as on so many others of historical or literary interest, some doubt is permissible. Mrs. Black had, it seems, two sisters, older and better-looking than herself, and credible persons have since assured me that it is by no means clearly established which of the trio really attracted the poet's fancy. The family, however, it appears, selected for immortal honour the youngest, who afterwards became Mrs. Black, and to her certainly in later years Gounod inscribed his charming setting of the famous verses.

At Athens too, while I think of it, I met and saw something of another lady to whom a romantic tale likewise attached—the wife, namely, of George Finlay, the distinguished historian of Greece, and for many years correspondent of the *Times* at Athens, with whom I had much interesting intercourse during my sojourn in the Greek capital. The story told was that Finlay, in the days when he came out as a young volunteer in the cause of Greek independence, had resided for some time at Constantinople, and there had much frequented the family of a wealthy Greek merchant, for one of whose daughters he had conceived a strong attachment. He had proposed to, and had been

accepted by, the young lady, but the father obstinately refusing his consent to the marriage, she had finally agreed to elope by sea with her admirer. As she was, however, watched and guarded with truly Oriental methods, no other means could be devised of getting her out of the paternal abode than by conveying her on board the vessel in a big packing-case,¹ supposed to contain some of her father's merchandise. The stratagem succeeded admirably, and the precious freight was safely shipped; but when Finlay broke open the lid to release the devoted captive he found, to his utter dismay, not the enchanting object of his affections, but an elder and very plain sister of hers who had substituted herself for the heroine, whose courage had failed her at the last moment. Finlay, of course, strongly demurred to this exchange, and some compulsion, so it is said, was needed to make him put up with the wrong lady. The marriage was, however, duly celebrated on board a British man-of-war in the Bosphorus, and, whatever Finlay's disappointment, he found in the person who had thus audaciously thrust herself upon him a devoted wife. She survived him a good many years, continuing to live on in the picturesque old house—in the more ancient (Turkish) part of the town at the foot of the Acropolis, close by the spot where Byron himself had resided—in which Finlay,

¹ According to one version, it was a clock-case—presumably a "grandfather's."

whose memory she worshipped, ended his days amidst his wealth of books and manuscripts. Unlike "the Maid of Athens," she was of the small, spare type of Levantine, with a dark skin and beady eyes, very simple and unpretending, having but little knowledge of the world and a moderate command of broken English—altogether the last piece of goods an ardent young Philhellene of such culture as Finlay's would have cared to smuggle out of her father's counting-house.

And having thus far indulged in digression, this reminds me, too, that next door to the home of Finlay was that of a still more devoted champion of the Greek cause, General Sir Richard Church. He must have been close upon eighty when I arrived at Athens in 1862, charged with many messages for him from my aunt, Mrs. Arabin, who, in her youth, had known him well at Naples—at the time he played so active a part in stamping out Muratism and brigandage¹—Vienna, and other places. Church, who came a great deal to the Legation, and was treated with much distinction by the young king—he held the honorary rank of Commander-in-Chief of the Greek Army—was a striking instance of how ineffaceable are our national stamp and habits. He had lived amongst the Greeks for at least forty years, after gallantly fighting for their freedom, and yet looked, for the life of him, as though he had never strayed from

¹ See "The Silver Skull," by S. R. Crockett.

the sweet, shady side of Pall Mall; and, in his well-cut frock-coat, high black stock just showing the shirt collar, and glossy hat cocked at the proper angle, might any day have walked down the steps at the Senior United Service. He rented a large rambling mansion, belonging to his neighbour Finlay, made conspicuous by a crazy old Turkish tower which one of my informants remembers to have seen rock during the disastrous earthquake that destroyed Thebes. Before the house was a spacious courtyard shaded by venerable sycamores, and here this sprupest of veterans dwelt with an ancient Greek aide-de-camp in full Palikari uniform and big mustachios for companion, keeping up to the end his active English ways, riding down to Phalerum every morning and having his plunge in the blue waters of the bay before breakfast. But, with all his British bearing and mode of life, in heart and soul he was entirely wrapped up in the country of his adoption, and, unlike the cool, dissecting Finlay, was, or affected to be, so blind to its blemishes and failings as to be intolerant even of any reflection upon it. Of a Sunday he used to hold levées which were largely attended by a number of old Palikari chieftains in the national dress. These he would introduce to his visitors, one by one, as Mr. So-and-so, "the best man in Greece," in this respect reminding one of our old friend Mr. Jefferson Brick,¹ with "the

¹ *Vide* "Martin Chuzzlewit."

most distinguished man of our country." In this simple, unshaken faith he went down to the grave, amidst the oleanders on the banks of Ilissus, where he fitly lies at no great distance from his neighbour, that other fighter in a noble but now, alas! somewhat discredited cause.

From Santa Maura we made for Argostoli in Cephalonia, where we stopped two days, taking long drives in the interior and round a great part of the island, and marvelling at the splendid network of roads so boldly carried over the hills in all directions—all the work of King Tom¹ and his soldiery—mournfully wondering the while how these masterpieces of engineering, fully comparable to the achievements of the Roman legionaries, might come to fare under a purely Greek *régime*. Whichever we went, indeed, all over these lovely islands, so wisely and munificently administered by us for half a century, the same thought obtruded itself: what means had the Greeks of continuing to the Ionians the benefits which our power and riches had insured to them? As an old retired soldier of ours bitterly said to me at Corfu, in pointing to the long line of substantial barracks just evacuated by our troops: "Why, sir, they haven't even got men enough to keep them properly swept!"

At Zante, where we made our last halt, we were received with even greater enthusiasm, if possible,

¹ Sir Thomas Maitland.

than elsewhere; or was it that the enchanting scenery of this Flower of the East¹ lent an additional charm to the welcome given us, and made the festive preparations appear more striking and more beautiful? We went here to an extremely pretty *fête champêtre* given by one of the principal *signori*, and on this occasion I had my only difference of opinion with the young king, under circumstances which, as it turned out, only served to increase my liking and respect for him. Zante was the stronghold of M. Lombardos, the arch-demagogue who, more than any one, had contributed to dissolve the tie that bound us to the islands, and, not content with driving us to withdraw from them out of sheer disgust and weariness, had heaped every kind of contumely upon us, not even sparing the fair name of the Queen in his vile aspersions of everything that was English. I was, therefore, not a little surprised and distressed —my feelings being shared by some persons of the highest position and intelligence among the Zantiotes—when, on the very day of our arrival in the island, M. Lombardos was invited to the royal table and treated with marked distinction by both the king and Count Sponneck. The following day, at this *fête* in the neighbourhood, the king again singled him out in the crowd and conversed with him for a considerable time. His Majesty then came across to where I stood, and perceiving,

¹ “Zante, fior di Levante.”

I suppose, that I was somewhat disturbed, inquired what was the matter. I then, in the most respectful language, admitted to the king that I had noticed with regret the favour with which he was treating a man who had been our worst enemy, and whose subversive principles (Lombardos was well known to be in intimate relations with the most active members of the revolutionary party in Italy and Austria) made him a decidedly dangerous element in so young a monarchy as that of Greece. I ventured, therefore, I said, earnestly to warn his Majesty against him. Instead of taking my assuredly well-meant observations in good part, the king flared up, said he knew what was best for his interests, and turning on his heel, left me abruptly. I had some conversation immediately afterwards with Count Sponneck, and spoke to him seriously on the subject of M. Lombardos and the regrettable effect which the exceptional favour shown to him might produce.

In the evening we dined as usual at the royal table on board the *Hellas*, and, as usual, too, I sat next Count Sponneck and opposite the king. Up to this moment his Majesty had preserved a very distant manner towards me, when suddenly—we were half-way through dinner—he called for a pencil, and, taking up a bill of fare that lay by his plate, wrote something at the back of it, and gave it to a servant to take round to me. It was in German—a language in which we frequently

conversed—and said, in the kindest terms, that he wished what had passed between us to be forgotten, and trusted it would in no way mar the friendship between us. I could only bow across the table at the moment, but when dinner was over, and we went on deck for coffee, I did my best to make the young king feel how deeply touched I was by this most friendly and gracious act on his part. I carefully preserved the *menu* card, and afterwards had it framed, with a photograph of the writer on either side of it.

Our delightful tour now drew to an end, and from Zante we shaped our course for the Piræus, touching on our way, for an hour or two, at the barren, half-desert island of Cerigo, which it is hard to picture to oneself as the original realm of Aphrodite. The day after our return to Athens Edward Erskine arrived from England to enter upon the duties of the post to which he had been appointed some months before, and as I had myself in the meantime been transferred to Berne, I determined to leave forthwith, and took my passage for Messina on July 8. On many grounds I regretted leaving Athens and parting from a few highly valued friends, foremost among whom was Admiral Yelverton, who had shown me the greatest kindness, and whom I shall ever look back upon as the most polished and accomplished specimen of the British naval officer it has been my good fortune to come across. Very sorry, too, was I to bid good-bye to

Finlay, whose unparalleled knowledge and experience of the country had been most valuable to me in drawing up some of the reports which the Foreign Office began to require from us about this period. Besides Finlay and that kindly old warrior, Church, I much regretted Merlin, at that time Vice-Consul at the Piræus, who, later on, as manager of the Ionian Bank, became a very shrewd and competent judge of the intricacies of Greek affairs, and especially of the finance of that country. But from Merlin, who continued to reside at Athens, where he did excellent service to our Government, especially at the time of the dreadful Oropos catastrophe, I was yet to experience much kindness in after years.

The king, in whose future welfare I could not but take the sincerest interest, was pleased to grant me a farewell private audience, at which he was good enough to express the hope that I might some day be accredited to him in a higher capacity. That desire has since been accomplished, but, on parting from the youthful sovereign, I little foresaw the complications which were to make my subsequent mission to him the most trying and distasteful, perhaps, that ever fell to the lot of one of the Queen's representatives.

CHAPTER XX

BERNE, 1864-1866

AT Messina I shifted to the Messageries steamer going up the Italian coast, and who should I find on board but pretty Mrs. de Robeck, of the golden hair and supple waist, who, with Mrs. Laffan, wife of the colonel commanding the Engineers at Malta, was bound for the Baths of Lucca. The de Robecks are near relations of my cousins the Levinges, and we had become very good friends at Athens and Corfu. Being myself on my way to Tuscany, it was an agreeable surprise to be thus assured of pleasant company the whole way. I stopped only a short time at Florence, during which I made an excursion to the Baths of Lucca, with my brother and sister-in-law and Mrs. Fleetwood Wilson, and here once more met my fellow-travellers from Messina. I never came across Mrs. de Robeck again, for she and her husband both died young, but there was something very taking about her fearless frankness, her unconventionalism, and half shy, half *brusque* Cape ways, of which I have somehow been since reminded by the charming heroine of that one masterpiece of Rider Haggard, "Jess."

I went over the Mont Cenis and reached Paris

on the 22nd of July, remaining there only a few days, this being the last time I saw my kind aunt de Polignac. She died some weeks later, the last of all my mother's family. She had never quite recovered the shock of the death of her daughter, Yolande de la Rochefoucauld, and her declining years were further darkened by the untimely end of her eldest son, Alphonse, who survived but a short time his marriage with the only daughter of the well-known financier, Mirès, an extremely nice, accomplished woman. My aunt was a dear old lady, of slight, *mignonne* build, with the most delicate, shapely hands and feet, and a gentle, low voice, and though she did not, I believe, much resemble my mother in features and general appearance, had these family characteristics in common with her. I always felt very much drawn towards her, though, from force of circumstance, I saw less of her than I did of my father's sisters. With all her placid exterior and quiet ways, her life had been one of severe trials borne with great courage, while her devotion to her husband during his rigorous confinement in the fortress of Ham was above all praise.¹ At her death the Polignac family home in the Rue de Berri was broken up, though her two youngest sons, Camille and Edmond, continued for

¹ "The princess and her children still live at the foot of the castle, doing everything in her (*sic*) power to alleviate her husband's confinement; he is about fifty-four years old, out of which time ten years have been passed in a prison under Napoleon and Louis Philippe."—*Journal of Thomas Raikes, Esq.*, 18th October 1835.

a few years to occupy an apartment in the old house, where our mutual cousin, Bessie Levinge, who had latterly lived with my aunt, made her home with them for some time.

On the 28th of July I went on to London, and stayed there a fortnight in some chambers in the Albany which Drummond-Wolff had obligingly placed at my disposal. My despatches from Athens and Corfu had met with a very favourable reception at the Foreign Office. At dinner at Cambridge House, Lord Palmerston, with his customary kindness, complimented me upon them; and the Prince of Wales sent for me, wishing to know how I had left affairs at Athens, and what I thought of the king and his prospects in Greece. This was the first occasion on which I had any conversation with his Royal Highness, whom I have had the honour to know better in later years, and he at once won me by his singularly gracious, kindly manner. Of the many princes I have met, none, except the illustrious sovereign to whom I was last accredited, can, in my opinion, compare with him in this respect. On the 13th of August I went down to the Rokebys at Hazlewood, near Watford, and off and on spent nearly a month under their hospitable roof. The whole Montagu tribe were gathered here—Tish Damer and her husband,¹ Lily Wellesley and her Dean,² Dot Ellison and her mother, and, of course, that

¹ Lionel Seymour Damer, afterwards 4th Earl of Portarlington.

² The late Honourable Gerard Wellesley, Dean of Windsor.

most devoted of daughters, Cinny Montagu.¹ Croquet matches—all the vogue in that only mildly athletic age—in the loveliest of gardens, drives, and walks to Cassiobury, the Grove, and the many other places of note in that delightful neighbourhood, with an occasional shot at the partridges in company of Hippy Damer, made the days fly fast and rapidly turn into weeks. I am never more content in England than with these kinsfolk of mine, and my affection for dear old Lord Rokeby himself could not be greater were he my nearest relation instead of my father's cousin. For many years he has always shown himself the best and staunchest of friends to me, and I am indebted to him for innumerable kindnesses. I cannot omit to mention a visit I paid at this time to Vale Royal, where I was most cordially received by my Vienna Greuze, now become Lady Delamere, and, as she herself put it, "an old man's darling." Vale Royal, where I have stayed several times since—although remarkable for its antiquity and fine old gardens, and the sylvan beauties of Delamere Forest close at hand—seems to me in itself a somewhat dull, gloomy abode in that most unattractive of counties, Cheshire. But its hostess has done a great deal for it, and has sunlight enough in herself to brighten any place.

Early in September I started for my new post, first going for a week to the Johannisberg, where I found the Pourtalès' *ménage* and Paul de Bussière;

¹ The Honourable Elizabeth Montagu.

Comtesse Mélanie Pourtalès more lovely and captivating than ever, and Princesse Pauline as usual full of *geist* and *entrain*. From the Johannisberg we went on *en masse* to the Robersau, the Pourtalès' place near Strasburg, and thence to Bussière's charming house at Schoppenwihr close to Mulhouse. During the short glimpse I thus had of the rich, smiling Alsatian country I little imagined that but a few years later it would be drenched with blood in the great struggle that was to wrest the fair province from France and restore it to its ancient German allegiance. From Schoppenwihr I took my final departure for Berne, reaching my destination on the afternoon of the 22nd.

I am conscious that it may seem idle to attempt to depict at length the well-known place which now became my home during four years, and where my hitherto somewhat aimless, disjointed life was to undergo so complete a change. Quite apart, however, from the many associations which afterwards endeared it to me, I may say that the impression made on me by its singular beauty, when I first looked on the prospect from the windows of the "Bernerhof," grew upon me more and more each day instead of being worn away by habit. Berne is indeed, to my mind, the most picturesquely lovely—although, I must confess, likewise the dullest—capital I am acquainted with, and I have often wondered why the great army of tourists that invades Switzerland in the summer months passes so hurriedly through the federal city,

or altogether gives it the go-by. It never perhaps looks to such advantage as at the time it is least visited, in the bright cold of the winter season, when the snow lies several inches deep in its quaint old streets and squares, and as many feet over the whole country round it. Seen then from some point outside the town—the summit of the long, steep rise on the high-road to Thun, for instance—the effect it produces is so striking that I am tempted to try my hand at a slight sketch of it in its winter garb.

Exactly opposite to us stands the town, raised high on its promontory above the deeply embanked river that divides us from it. The crowded gabled roofs and towers are thickly laden with speckless snow, in sharpest contrast with the grey, weather-stained walls of the buildings, and the brown pediment formed by the buttresses that support the Minster and the ancient arsenal, together with the quaint, patrician houses of the Rue des Gentilshommes. Snow patches mark the little terraced gardens that stretch down to the river-side, snow sparkles on the branches of the horse-chestnut trees on the little platform behind the grand old church, cushions the parapets of the bridges, glistens on the balconies and over the doorways, carpets the long slope at our feet, and fills the bear-pit at the bottom of the hill, gladdening the hearts of its furry inmates. All around is a dazzling white, and above a clear pale blue, while, in the chasm below us, the arrowy Aare runs swiftly past, its bright green current

flecked with drifting ice, till, sweeping under the arch of the Nydeck bridge, it takes a sudden turn to the north, hugging the town as it flows, and all but encircling it in its embrace. As we stand and note all this, counting, as it were, the windows in the long broken line of buildings that crowns the ridge, and looking down into the wood-yards and breweries of the shabby, straggling suburb along the water's edge, every detail of the picture stands out so clear and sharply cut that we cannot help comparing it to a huge Nuremberg toy, or, better still, to some gigantic piece of confectionery, all coated over with sugar, and rising from a pedestal of chocolate or gingerbread. But three o'clock strikes from the "Zitglockenthurm" in the city over the way; the deep tones of the Minster following suit. Along the road, where we have lingered so long, the skaters come trooping down from the Egerimoosli pond of treacherous memory—a detachment of French cuirassiers is said to have broken through the ice and been drowned there in the old wars of the Revolution—and a couple of sledges glide merrily past with bells and jingling harness, crossed by a string of milk-carts and long *leiterwagen* laden with boozy peasants returning from market. It will soon be dark, so we too trudge down the hill, and, crossing the bridge, pass up the steep street, with its queer, stuffy little shops. The low, unsavoury arcades that line it are damp with melted snow, and thronged with hulking Oberländers and their black-

bodiced, white-chemiseted womankind. Here it is bitterly cold and draughty, and we are glad to get back to our snug corner by the fireplace at home, where, alas! no letters or papers await us, for the passes are all snowed up, and for two days past the post from England has failed us.

I was kindly greeted on my arrival at Berne by the Third Secretary of Legation, Henry Dering,¹ who, with his young wife, occupied a gloomy but comfortable apartment in the Hallwyl house in the *Gerechtigkeits Gasse*. The next day I went out to Gümlingen to pay my respects to my new chief. Admiral Harris,² with his family, spent his summers at a small country house there belonging to the Tschanns—a quaint and very perfect specimen of the Swiss château, with an old-fashioned garden surrounded by orchards, and dating back to the opening of the eighteenth century. I have remained on terms of great friendship with the Harrises ever since, and a more amiable, kindlier family does not, I believe, exist. The Admiral is blessed with a number of daughters—blessed, I may say, in a perfectly literal sense, for they are as charming as they are numerous, though when I first knew them, Miss Harris (Conty Harris to her many friends) alone had attained the dignity of young ladyhood. I was so cordially received at Gümlingen that I was left in little doubt as to my billet at Berne being a good

¹ Now Sir Henry Dering, Bart., and his Majesty's Minister in Brazil.

² Admiral the Hon. Sir Edward Harris, K.C.B.

one so far as my relations with my chief and his family were concerned—no small matter, as those who have trod the paths of diplomacy well know.

As for the *chers collègues*, I met most of them every day at dinner at the Bernerhof, but will reserve till later the little I have to say of them. These same *chers collègues*, taken *en masse*, by the way, are, to my mind, one of the tribulations attaching to diplomatic life. With certain brilliant exceptions, of course, the average diplomatic small fry are persons of fewer social resources than pretensions, and I have often felt inclined to resent the claim they are apt to put forward to a closer intimacy, or *camaraderie*, on the mere strength of their forming part of that sacred phalanx, the *corps diplomatique*. This has been rather aggravated of late years by the fact that the service is partly recruited—notably in Republican France—from a somewhat different class of society. At the same time there is no denying that the yearly increasing stress of serious work thrown upon, and the solid acquirements now required of, the junior diplomatist, have considerably raised his intellectual level, even though from a purely social point of view he may not be as pleasant and polished a trifler as he was in the good old easy-going days of my youth.

The Bernerhof is an excellent, well-managed house in all respects, but I nevertheless looked out at once for a more private and less expensive habitation, and pitched upon some good rooms in the

dépendance of the old Hôtel du Faucon—the classic hostelry of Berne—where I made myself comfortable against the fast approaching winter.

Berne, although the smallest and shabbiest of European capitals, is endowed with an imposing array of diplomatic missions. All the great Powers, and most of the lesser, are represented there, and the *corps diplomatique* musters in sufficient numbers to make up of itself a fairly large society. This is so far fortunate, there being scarcely any native social ingredients in the place. The majority of the ancient Bernese patrician houses are ruined, or have greatly sunk in the worldly scale, and only a few of them are yet to be found in their old homes of the Rue des Gentilshommes, still chafing at the turn of events which finally drove their class from power half a century ago, and playing at a kind of mock Faubourg St. Germain, which, unlike its noble prototype, in no way appeals to the imagination. A broken, battered oligarchy ; what dignity and refinement they ever were graced with having faded out of their lives, and left them all but undistinguishable from the rugged mass of their fellow-countrymen. Yet their forbears played no inglorious part in what might be termed the Venetian days of the Bernese Republic, not to mention the grand example they at all times gave of unflinching fidelity to the foreign flags under which they served, while—as regards antiquity—some of them can vie with the oldest houses in Europe. Take the Hallwyls,

for instance, who claim, with some foundation it is said, that a Habsburg served as page in their halls. A similar pretension, put forward by the Mülinens, reminds me of a story told of a scion of that family who, somewhat late in life, had entered the French Diplomatic Service, and was employed as a Junior Secretary at Frankfort, where he of course became acquainted with the late Count Rechberg, at that time presiding over the Federal Diet in his quality of Austrian Envoy. Mülinen, who was a disagreeable, cantankerous fellow, had taken it into his head that Count Rechberg was not sufficiently civil to him, and accordingly tried one day to pick a quarrel while playing whist with him at the Club. "Vous oubliez," he said, "Monsieur le Comte, que les ancêtres de votre souverain ont servi un des miens." "Vraiment!" replied Rechberg, scarcely looking up from his cards, "dans ce cas il faut convenir que votre ancêtre a fait une bien mauvaise carrière."

With the exception of a few of the younger men, such as Edouard de Sinner, Victor de Tschann, and a Muralt or two, the patricians kept almost entirely aloof from us unfortunate *diplomates*, ostensibly on the ground of our being accredited to a Government they ignored, but in reality, I believe, from feelings in which a lingering sense of ancestral pride mingled with an almost Eastern horror of allowing any stranger an insight into their decayed homes and narrow, penurious style of life. The only hospitality they dispensed took the form of a couple of sub-

scription balls given during the winter at the old hotel of the *Pfistern*, or *Boulangers*, to which all the diplomatic body were invited as guests. The peculiar dresses and somewhat provincial air of the Bernese aristocrats would alone have made these entertainments remarkable, but their crowning feature was a band composed of ancient female fiddlers, led by a weird old witch of the name of Marti, who, with her company, looked like Hecate conducting an orchestra of Fates disguised in Oberland costume. Another characteristic detail of these revels of the Bernese upper ten was the crowd of serving-girls waiting outside for their respective *Herrschäften* with huge lanterns, emblazoned with the family coats of arms, which they carried in state before them on their way home. The ancient hostelry of the *Pfistern*, where these dances were given, had formerly been the *Abbaye des Boulangers*, or Hall of the Bakers' Guild. These guilds were still kept up to a certain extent, the patricians themselves belonging to some of them, and likewise forming a corporation of their own known as the *Abbaye des Gentilshommes*. As such, in their capacity of *bourgeois de Berne*, they owned in common considerable tracts of wood and other land all round the federal city, and were thereby entitled, besides other advantages, to so much fuel for their private consumption out of the corporation forests. Of their former opulence the old guilds still preserved a certain number of fine tankards

and other silver plate, but only a tithe of the great stores of valuables which—on that fatal day of April 1798, when the French General Brune occupied Berne with his *sans culotte* forces—had all to be brought by their owners into the market-place, whence, together with the treasury of the Bernese State, they were taken to replenish the French Republican coffers.

The unsociability of the natives led to our being thrown on our own resources, and brought about a greater intimacy among a certain small set of colleagues which has left me many pleasant recollections. The French Embassy ranked first in every way. Old Marquis Turgot, grandson of the Minister of Louis XVI., was the Ambassador, having been transferred to this quiet place after his misadventure at Madrid, where the American Minister, a bully of the name of Soulé, had forced a duel upon him in which he was severely wounded in the leg, the late Lord Howden acting as second to his French colleague. Maimed for life, the poor old fellow had few pleasures left beyond those of the table, and he and his stout, cheery Marquise, a daughter of Mouton, Comte Lobau, of Napoleonic fame, kept open house for all of us in a style far removed from the frugality sometimes observable in French houses. Vicomte Siméon, the Second Secretary of the Embassy, and his remarkably handsome wife, were another most friendly and hospitable couple, and almost outvied their chiefs in entertaining.

Private theatricals have always been one of the

favourite diversions among *diplomates* at Berne, and Siméon was the life and soul of these. Although without very great natural gifts in this direction—his acting rather reminding one of the *cabotinage* of French provincial theatres—he was a capital stage-manager, and would have made his fortune as such touring about *dans les départements*. “Floridor,” as his colleague and my old Baden friend, Baron de Reinach, now First Secretary at Berne, had nicknamed him, at once incorporated me in his *troupe*, and the first winter I spent at Berne was enlivened by a series of performances given in a large room we hired at the old Faucon Inn. And very successful these plays were, thanks principally to the remarkable talent of Madame de Bresson, wife of another of the French Secretaries, and daughter of that notorious duellist, the Marquis du Hallay, who, in his old age, became the recognised umpire in the more delicate “affairs of honour” that took place in France. With the exception of my little Russian sister-in-law, Charlotte de Bresson was the most gifted amateur actress I ever came across, and in pathetic parts, in which she excelled, had a power of moving an audience such as I have seldom seen surpassed on the real stage.

We acted that winter *La Famille Lambert*, *Le Pour et le Contre*, *Une Tasse de Thé*, *Le Piano de Berthe*, and other well-known pieces of the day, besides a screaming Palais Royal farce or two, and certainly gained great applause—whether well de-

served or not is another affair. All this threw me a good deal into the intimacy of the Siméon *ménage*, who afforded a curious psychological study. Siméon and his wife, although at bottom entertaining a real regard for each other, seemed deliberately to have agreed to disagree, and their constant bickerings on questions of relatively little importance led in the end to much unhappiness and to a final separation. It was a singularly sad instance of the evils of incompatibility of temper. Madame Siméon, when they married, was a widow with a very considerable jointure, and belonged to one of the strait-laced families still to be met with among the higher French *bourgeoisie*. General Fleury, who enjoyed such favour under the Second Empire, was a first cousin of hers, and she was also in some way connected with the Seillières. Although thus linked with the brilliant and somewhat lax society of the Tuilleries, poor Eugénie Siméon—as beautiful in her way as that other Imperial Eugénie who then reigned on high—unflinchingly followed the straight, but narrow, path she had set herself, and would, I believe, have ended in a convent had she not been struck down in her prime by a cruel and lingering complaint.

The winter and early spring of 1865 passed away eventlessly as far as I was concerned, and at the end of March I went on four months' leave, of which I spent the greater part in Paris, at this time of year, and this most splendid epoch of the Napoleonic *régime*, more dazzling than I have ever

known it before or since. Thanks to my acquaintance with the Metternichs, I saw a good deal of that much-criticised coterie, known under the sobriquet of *cocodès* and *cocodettes*, of which my vivacious and *spirituelle* friend Princesse Pauline was the ruling genius. Assuredly the very quintessence of smartness—or what in those days was termed “chic”—it scarcely deserved the strictures that were passed upon it, and was merely a set of light-hearted people who made pleasure and amusement the main pursuit of their lives. If anything, they may perhaps be charged with having given the first impulse to that extravagance in all things appertaining to dress which marks the latter half of the century, for these were the days that ushered in the despotism of the great Worth, and led to a refinement in ladies' clothes such as had not been seen since the First Empire, or, in a less degree, the Regency in England. However this may be, there was much that was seductive about this joyous, *insouciant* society—heedless of the morrow and bent solely on the flitting fancy of the hour—even though the part it played is best to be described in the cynical saying of one who had fully contributed his share to the great crash that was to follow so soon: “C'est égal! Nous nous sommes tout de même joliment bien amusés!”

Living, though only for the time, within the inner circle of this clique—in it and yet not out of it—I probably saw it at its best. The famous

Lundis de l'Impératrice, the sumptuous *fêtes* given at the Hôtel Seillièr, at the Galliffets, at the d'Henins, the races at Longchamps and at Chantilly—at all these I was present and thoroughly enjoyed myself, having my full fling of Paris life at its most brilliant period. Of course I most frequented the Metternich *salon*, where, among others, one generally met those two distinguished representatives of Prussian diplomacy, Prince Reuss and Paul Hatzfeldt¹—the latter but recently wedded to a charming little American lady—the very lovely Countess Mélanie Pourtalès, the Sagans and Galliffets, and, added to these, a sprinkling of well-known political or literary characters, such as the Orleanist *frondeur* Edmond de Lafayette, or that intimate of the Tuilleries, Bacciochi, Prosper Merimée, and an artist or two, for the hostess was far too clever and accomplished not to seek to leaven her brilliant *entourage* with elements that kept her in touch with the wit and intellect which have ever abounded in the most fascinating of capitals.

One night I went, with a small party, to her box at the Opera—the old house in the Rue Lepeletier—to the dress rehearsal of the *Africaine*. It was a grand function—made memorable by the care bestowed on the production of Meyerbeer's posthumous work²—and the house was crowded from

¹ The late Count Hatzfeldt Wildenburg, so many years German Ambassador in London.

² The *Africaine* was first given on the 28th April 1865. Meyerbeer died two years before, on 2nd May 1863.

top to bottom with the *élite* of the Paris world. There was a deal of applause, of the kind which, with other matters, they manage so well in France ; but, altogether, the opera seemed to fall flat, and was decidedly drawn out and wearisome, for we did not get away till near two o'clock, more than satiated with close upon six hours of the Meyerbeerian strains. The tenor, Naudin, sang the fine air, *O Paradis, sorti de l'onde*, with great effect ; and the final love duet—a feeble copy of that in the *Huguenots*—together with the clap-trap phrase for all the stringed instruments in unison, made some impression ; but the music struck one as being laboured and lacking in inspiration, and, as the spiteful Rossini, who was extremely jealous of the composer, once said of his works, was redolent of the lamp-oil of the night-watches (*sentait l'huile de lampe*). However this may be, it is certain that now, with the exception of some portions of the *Huguenots*—by far his finest effort—our highly trained modern audiences scarcely tolerate Meyerbeer's compositions, and still less—save the immortal *Barbiere*, and perhaps *Guillaume Tell*—those of his predecessor, the “swan of Pesaro.” But in nothing more than in music, perhaps, does taste unconsciously undergo so thorough a transformation, and speaking of Princesse Metternich, in connection with first performances at the Paris Opera House, what better proof can be afforded of this than the disastrous failure a year or two later

of her attempt to introduce Wagner to the French public? Who that witnessed that failure—making due allowance for the political feeling that lay at bottom of it—could have foreseen the enthusiasm now evoked in France by the works of Wagner? That Princesse Pauline should have lived to see so complete a reversal may well be not the least curious or gratifying of her varied experiences.

Among my recollections of what I might term my temporary affiliation to the *cocodès* set, I would mention going with a large gathering of these pleasant, frolicsome folk on several drags—which just then were coming into fashion at Paris—to St. Germain en Laye. We started from the Seillière house, Sagan driving one of the coaches, while another was committed to the care of that queer creature, the Marquis Omer Talon, well known in English racing circles, but whose acquaintance I then made for the first time. When Talon came into the room to inform the ladies that the coaches were ready, I made sure by his rig that he was Sagan's English stud-groom, and was much scandalised at first by his familiar manner towards the smart lady, whoever she was, who occupied the box-seat by him. His one aim in life was to be taken for a Newmarket trainer, and his horsey get-up and utterly h-less language certainly went a long way towards fostering the illusion. On this occasion we dined sumptuously at the Pavillon Henri Quatre, and had afterwards an impromptu

dance, finishing with a somewhat lively quadrille, which gave occasion to some scandalous remarks in a paper then edited by Aurélien Scholl. There was a great row over the whole affair, which ended in M. Scholl being made to apologise and eat his words. I remained in Paris till after the memorable race for the "Grand Prix," which fell to the only French winner of the Derby, "Gladiateur," and I well remember the wild enthusiasm of the vast, well-dressed crowd that thronged the course when the gallant animal passed the post an easy victor. Trafalgar and Waterloo—not to speak of Cressy and Agincourt—were avenged for the time by this double achievement. He certainly was a wonderful horse, and struck even me, who do not pretend to any deep knowledge of the points of a racer, by his magnificent frame and the length of his stride, his gallop seeming scarcely more than a long, swinging canter.

On the 14th June I went over to London for two or three weeks, and on a lovely afternoon at Ascot, while wandering among the crowd of coaches in search of luncheon, espied on one of them the young lady of the witching voice with whom I had travelled from the Piræus to Messina some eighteen months before. I approached her with my best bow, but met with so distant a recognition that I withdrew discomfited, little foreseeing under what circumstances we were to meet again so many years later.

Not long after this I returned to my post, and

then began fully to realise its charms as a summer residence. Let alone the splendid scenery within easy reach of it at Thun, Interlaken, Grindelwald, and all that well-known region—then studded with snug, unpretentious inns, instead of the huge caravansaries with which Limited Liability Hotel Companies have since defaced some of the most lovely spots on earth—the immediate neighbourhood of Berne itself is full of beauty and variety, and many were the delightful walks and picnics I can bring to mind in the recesses of the grand old Bremgarten woods, on the heights of the Gurten, or where, near Reichenbach, the hurrying, ever-winding Aare makes a great loop through the forest, in front of a queer little high-roofed Swiss château, with a simple country inn adjoining it, famous for its *matelotes* and other breakfast fare. In August I made a short trip to Geneva and Chamouny, with my particular friends the Belgian Secretary, Baron Greindl and his wife, and a good-natured French Attaché of the name of Rampin. I have preserved a very vivid impression of this tour, for I then for the first time became acquainted with the full grandeur of Alpine scenery, though unfortunately prevented by an unconquerable tendency to *vertige* from attempting anything like real mountaineering. There is much pleasure, nevertheless, to be had in some of the less difficult excursions, or in walking over the many beautiful passes, and a light-weight, with a serviceable pair

of legs, ought, as I did, to get a great deal of enjoyment out of these, without aspiring to scale impossible peaks and *aiguilles*. But, at the time I speak of, Alpine climbing had not attained its later development, and was more or less confined to the daring exploits of the earliest masters of the art, such as Whymper, poor Hudson, and a few others. Since then it has been made comparatively easy, and reduced, as it were, to an exact science. It assuredly is a noble form of sport, and calls forth all the best qualities and energies in those who have the requisite physical gifts to indulge in it.

And this reminds me that the catastrophe on the Matterhorn, which had occurred very shortly before this, must be put down to the imprudence of the veteran Hudson in allowing an inexperienced youth like Hadow to join in the perilous attempt on a peak which till then had baffled the most highly trained climbers, including Professor Tyndall himself. I well remember the news of this fearful catastrophe, which was then unique in the annals of Alpine adventure, reaching Berne on the afternoon of the 17th of July. Indeed, the beautiful solemn mountains were cruelly exacting during that summer season of 1865. Only a few weeks earlier, on the 21st of June, Alice Arbuthnot had been killed by lightning on the Schilthorn while on her wedding tour. I was still in England at the time, and only two days before had been at a dance at her parents' house in Portman Square—the

last occasion on which I saw George Rivers¹ and his wife, who survived the shock of the loss of their lovely daughter but a few months—dying within two days of each other. On my return to Berne I naturally undertook the superintendence of the arrangements the poor thing's husband and family wished made for her grave in the Montbijou Cemetery at Berne, and for the erection of a memorial cross on the very spot where she had been killed. Major Arbuthnot came out from England for the removal of the remains from their temporary resting-place, and then gave me a very minute account of the appalling event. The Schilt-horn—not far from 9000 feet high, and very easy of ascent—was the first mountain the young couple attempted to go up. They started from the inn at Mürren on a splendid, cloudless day, taking with them a guide and a few provisions. When they had reached a point only a few hundred feet from the summit, just short of the steep crowning snow-ridge, Arbuthnot, noting signs of fatigue in his wife, advised her not to go any farther, and installed her in a safe place on a slab of rock forming a natural bench (afterwards brought down and placed on the grave at Berne),² cautioning her not to stir while he was away from her. His object in going up higher, so he explained to me, was

¹ The 4th Lord Rivers, married to the eldest daughter of the 1st Earl Granville.

² I have a paper-weight made of a fragment of this rock.

to practise sliding down the snow-slope with the help of his alpenstock after the fashion of the guides. He had climbed, he reckoned, for scarcely more than a quarter of an hour after leaving his wife, when the sky became suddenly overcast with a lurid pall of cloud. The guide exclaimed, "Monsieur, il va faire mauvais temps, il faut descendre," and, at once turning, slid down the mountain-side with all speed. Arbuthnot had just followed his example when a scorching, blinding flash and a terrific clap of thunder proved he was in for one of the sudden violent storms so common at those altitudes. He hurried down as fast as he could, and, on nearing the bottom of the slope, saw the guide, who had preceded him, throw up his hands with a gesture of dismay. He found his wife exactly in the position in which he had left her; only, instead of being seated upright, she was lying back, but otherwise quite undisturbed. The small pork-pie hat she had worn lay at her feet with its crown burnt out, the metal brooch at her throat was twisted and blackened, and on her forehead there was a slight mark, as of a burn, which alone showed where the fluid had entered and struck her down. No change whatever in the charming, placid countenance, not the slightest contraction of the limbs—a release, in short, absolutely perfect in its suddenness. It is difficult to imagine a more agonising wait than that of the unfortunate husband keeping watch by her for

hours in the mountain solitude, while the guide hurried to Mürren and returned thence with assistance to bear her down. After such an experience it would seem barely possible to face life again. Yet, a few years afterwards, Arbuthnot married one of the Moncreiffes, and, losing her too in a couple of years, took unto himself a third wife.

To go back, after this digression, to my trip to Chamouny, we returned from thence, mostly on foot, over the lovely pass of the Tête Noire, to Martigny, going on the next day to the charming "Beau Rivage" hotel at Ouchy, and from there back to Berne. It was altogether a delightful excursion. Greindl, who, since then, has made for himself a considerable name in the service of his country, and was the right hand of King Leopold in that bold conception of his, the Congo Free State, is a most interesting companion. His information on a variety of subjects is remarkable, while, unlike some of his countrymen, he is, besides, very light in hand and the best of company. I saw a great deal of him, and profited much by his society. His desire to improve himself was insatiable, and time hanging heavily on his hands at Berne, he took to learning Arabic, having fished out a distinguished Orientalist, Sprenger, the author of a standard life of Mahomet, who was then living in retirement in one of the suburbs of the federal city. For a month or two Greindl induced me to join him in this study, but I did not take to it kindly, and soon had to give

it up, all my thoughts and spare time being occupied with some very serious family differences in which, unfortunately, I could not avoid being mixed up.

After the great interest and excitement of my Greek experiences, Swiss affairs and politics necessarily seemed rather tame, and what work I had to do—mostly confined to commercial or financial reports—was not of an absorbing character. Nevertheless, in many respects, Switzerland affords excellent opportunities to the political student. It is a perfect microcosm in itself, and some of the most interesting political problems and questions that occupy the world—Centralisation as opposed to Federalism or Home Rule; the division between local and central powers; the relations between Church and State; the antagonism born of differences of religion or race—are to be seen there within so small a compass that they lend themselves to much more careful examination than when studied on more extensive fields. During my two sojourns at Berne—for I was to return there a good many years afterwards as Minister Resident—the centralising movement, or attempt at finally transforming the Swiss *Staatenbund* into a *Bundesstaat*, was in full force under the auspices of the Radical party, who controlled most of the cantonal governments. The rights and attributions of the cantons had already been much narrowed down, and the final transference of all power from them to the Confederation appeared to be only a question of time.

The sturdy Conservative instincts of the Swiss people have since then somewhat arrested this movement, and the Swiss seem indeed now to be in doubt as to their country gaining strength and vitality by a process of unification. It may well be questioned whether, in an organisation like that of Switzerland, where the subject of nationalities—two of them, the French and German, differing essentially in many important points—plays so considerable a part, the elastic ties of a truly federal union may not prove stronger and more durable than the outwardly more vigorous mechanism of an *Etat unitaire* in federal disguise. The risk of disaffection on the part of the French cantons, in many respects the most advanced and highly cultured, has been increased by the greater weight which the already preponderating German cantons have gained through the triumph of Germany over France. However sincerely attached to their national independence, these two divisions of the Swiss people respectively gravitate towards, and are necessarily influenced by, the great cognate Powers which adjoin them. An excessive centralisation that should mostly profit the Germanic majority might therefore create serious dangers for the federal union. On similar grounds, a religious persecution, such as was at one time attempted by the Bernese and Genevese Governments, in imitation of the *Culturkampf* in Germany, might, if persisted in, have led to disastrous results.

But disquisitions like the above may, perhaps.

seem out of place in this slight and sketchy record of my past experiences. I have indulged in them partly to free myself from the suspicion of not having taken *au sérieux* my duties as a diplomatic observer, and partly also to lead to a few words concerning the men in whose hands was placed the management of all these complex and ticklish questions. The Federal Council, or Executive of the Confederation, are in themselves an interesting study, and I cannot, I think, describe them better than by quoting the words I used of them in one of my despatches from Berne during my second residence there :—

“The Federal Council,” I wrote, “composed of middle-class men of simple ways and exterior, have to deal with such minute and intricate affairs that they might, I venture to think, be aptly described as a Government of watchmakers. As in the characteristic industry of their country, their attention is unremittingly engaged by the most delicate mechanism of Government; by the wheels within wheels of federal or cantonal attributes and prerogatives; by the most careful balancing of relations between contending sects and churches; by endeavours to preserve the counterpoise between two—not to say three—nationalities which recent events outside Switzerland have rendered somewhat antagonistic. Each and all of these subjects being further complicated by those questions of persons or of small coteries which play so great a part in the miniature politics of the country. Their task is thus essentially one of patience and

circumspection, of constant vigilance and careful supervision.”¹

And marvellously well they acquit themselves of it. These plain, unassuming men, taken mostly from the ranks of the lesser *bourgeoisie*,² and therefore very correct exponents of the views and feelings of the better educated mass of their countrymen, bring to their arduous duties a remarkable degree of tact and sagacity, and form an Executive as able and efficient as any I have seen at work in the many countries I have resided in. Nor should it be forgotten that, in accepting office, most of these capable administrators exchange remunerative employment in their respective cantons for an official salary not exceeding the modest figure of 12,000 francs (L480) per annum ; the President of the Confederation, who is chosen from amongst them for the term of one year, himself not receiving more than 13,500 francs (L540). On the other hand, in devoting themselves to the public service, they are assured of

¹ My very excellent friend, the late Sir Francis Ottiwell Adams, did me the honour of embodying the whole of this passage, almost *verbatim*, in his valuable work entitled, “The Swiss Confederation” (Macmillan & Co., 1889). At page 64 he says : “A diplomatist who knew them (the Federal Council) well, and appreciated their good qualities, aptly remarked that they reminded him of a characteristic industry of their own country, of watchmaking.” And he then goes on to transcribe the entire passage without any inverted commas to mark it as a quotation. A singular, however friendly, instance of the crib unacknowledged.

² There are, of course, exceptions to this. M. Bavier of the Grisons, M. Fornerod of Vaud, and M. Hammer of Argovie are instances of men of good means and position in their respective cantons.

a long lease of power, for, unlike other Executives under a parliamentary system, the Federal Council practically constitute a permanent Cabinet entirely independent of party claims, and are not displaced at will by a shifting majority in the Legislature. Being thus outside the range of parliamentary strife, the Council frequently contains men of widely divergent views, who none the less work harmoniously together for the common good. These arrangements, which secure to the country for a long period (some of the Federal Councillors have held office for over twenty years) the continuous services of a set of perfectly trained and experienced officials, cannot, it seems to me, be too highly commended. At any rate, they admirably suit the peculiar requirements of the Swiss people, whom they provide, at trifling cost, with a thoroughly competent and at the same time independent Administration.

The high character and integrity of the Federal Councillors have indeed never been called in question, and in this respect they may challenge comparison with governing bodies in other democracies. Only on one occasion, as far as I know, has the slightest aspersion been cast on any of their number, and in that instance the person concerned—the able but unprincipled Staempfli—had ceased for some years to form part of the Council. Certainly his attitude in the affair of the Alabama claims was suspiciously strange, and had very disastrous results for us. Unfortunately, our representative in

Switzerland at that time was partly answerable for the mischief done. The story is, I believe, not generally known. When Geneva had been selected as the place where the arbitrators were to meet, and it became necessary to decide who was to represent Switzerland on the Tribunal, the American Minister at Berne called one day on his British colleague to consult him in a friendly way as to who, in his opinion, would be a suitable person for the purpose. At the same time he suggested, as from himself, that Professor König of the University of Berne—an authority of the first rank in matters of international law—would, to his mind, be an excellent selection. He knew, he added, that the Professor was desirous of the appointment, and if the representative of England would join in recommending him he would no doubt be chosen. König—of whom I afterwards saw a good deal—was remarkably well affected towards England, besides being standing legal adviser to our Legation. Like some of his countrymen, however, he was a man of rough, abrupt manners, and had succeeded in ruffling the susceptibilities of her Majesty's Minister by treating him with less ceremony than that worthy, but somewhat touchy, personage deemed to be his due. The friendly Professor happened thus to be in the Minister's black books. Instead, therefore, of simply acquiescing in the unexpectedly advantageous proposal made to him by his American colleague (he need not have moved at all in the matter himself),

our representative assumed a lofty tone, and said that he considered it was not for her Majesty's Minister to offer any opinion respecting the choice to be made. The American Minister, thus rebuffed, abandoned all thought of recommending König, and gave his support to Staempfli instead; the result being that, on points where even the American arbitrator sided with us, the Swiss went dead against us and showed us throughout the most uncompromising hostility. In fact, in the opinion of those best acquainted with the inner history of the affair, this blunder of our representative, by bringing about the appointment of the corrupt and hostile Staempfli, led, in some degree, to the award given against us to the tune of three million sterling.

I need scarcely say that the worthy Federals, with all their intrinsic merits, did not shine in society. They led retiring, hard-working lives, in very modest surroundings, and there was a story of some diplomatist, who was leaving a card on the President at his private abode, being admitted by a lady with her sleeves tucked up and her arms covered with soap-suds, Madame la Présidente having come straight from the family wash-tub to answer the bell. The only occasion for social intercourse between the members of the Government and ourselves was the annual *dîner fédéral*, for which the President receives a special allowance, and which used to be given by rotation at one or other of the principal hotels of the town. To this the entire *corps diplomatique*

matique, as well as all the higher federal and cantonal functionaries, were bidden. It was a huge and sumptuous entertainment, the Council doing themselves and their guests right well in the matter of food and drink. We made it a rule to take our leave as soon as possible after the dinner, which was interminable; but our hosts kept up the festivity till well into the small hours, and one foggy night a certain member of the Council was reported to have come to grief walking home, and found his way into a ditch, whence he was extricated by passers-by in the early morning. These hard-headed Switzers, although habitually abstemious enough, are formidable topers on occasion. The most perfect presentment of a Teutonic Bacchus or Gambrinus I ever came across was old Schiessl, the Secretary of the Federal Council—practically a permanent Under Secretary of State—an admirable official, but a tun of a man, with a perpetual *Alpen-glühn* on his fat, jovial face, and withal of a Rabelaisian wit and humour.

I spent most of the autumn and winter of this year at Berne, where I remember we had capital skating on some flooded meadows by the banks of the Aare, just below the Bernerhof. But for the anxiety caused me by the family troubles I have alluded to, time sped away pleasantly enough in the sleepy, but sociable, federal city.

CHAPTER XXI

LIFE AT BERNE, 1866-1868

THE opening of the year 1866—a momentous one in the world's history—found me settled in a corner house of the recently opened Rue Fédérale, exactly facing the gap left between the Bernerhof and the Fédéral Palace. My lodging, a modest *entresol*, thus had a lovely outlook towards the Bernese Alps, and it was roomy enough to enable me to put up a friend or two on occasion. Here I spent the best part of two years of unbroken sunshine, and first came to know the blessings of a genuine home.

My sister and her daughter, now a girl of fourteen, came on a visit to me at the beginning of March, remaining till early in June. During the three months she kept house for me, my rooms became a favourite centre for the small set of colleagues with whom I mostly consorted. She had brought with her from Baden-Baden an excellent French cook of the toothsome sounding name of Fraisier, and we gave little dinners which were in great request. Indirectly, my sister's visit led to my marriage. About this time a new American Minister had been appointed to Berne in the person of Mr. George Harrington, who had held office as

Assistant Secretary to the Treasury under Mr. Chase all through the great civil contest in the United States, and had, in that capacity, done distinguished service. Mr. Harrington brought with him his wife and two grown-up daughters by his first marriage with a Miss Barney, whose father was one of the chief naval worthies of the revolutionary war. The ladies of the family soon became very popular in our little set, my sister especially taking a great fancy to the daughters, the youngest of whom, afterwards my wife, was then but little over eighteen. Their step-mother, Mrs. Harrington, was a Miss Scott, niece and adopted daughter of a Mr. Seaton, who for many years was the proprietor of the *National Intelligencer* of Washington, one of the ablest and most respectable newspapers ever published in the States. Under his hospitable roof she had been acquainted with most of the distinguished persons, whether American or foreign, who had visited Washington during more than a quarter of a century, and had become a highly cultivated woman of decided English tastes and proclivities, such as clung to a generation still strongly imbued with the old Colonial traditions, and in many ways bound to England by sentiment. Under her guidance her younger step-daughter especially had blossomed into a very perfect type of the young American girl, with all that unconscious charm and simple grace which, when found in her countrywomen, can hardly, I think, be surpassed. It is difficult for me to write

of the wife I lost, very suddenly, after a few brief years of great happiness. I will only say that without being endowed with striking beauty she was most attractive. Very slight and graceful, a little above the middle height, she had small and exquisitely shaped hands and feet and a wealth of fair hair, in charming contrast with her hazel eyes and perfectly marked dark eyebrows. . . . Unfortunately, none of the photographs taken of her do her anything like justice, while a picture painted by Weigall from the indications I furnished him—and on which he bestowed infinite pains—by no means conveys an accurate idea of her.

But I must turn from this painful subject to the important political events which marked this summer of 1866. The grave dissensions that had arisen between Austria and Prussia, in connection with the affairs of Schleswig-Holstein, had now culminated in open hostility. The effete Germanic Confederation, of the working of which I had seen something in my Frankfort days, was tottering on the brink of ruin within a short year of the fiftieth anniversary of its establishment. That long-impending breach between the two great German Powers, towards which the deeply laid, relentless plans of Bismarck had been directed from the first, could no longer be staved off. Germany was divided into two camps, and, after fruitless attempts at some agreement, war actually broke out in the middle of what happened to be a glorious month of June.

Most sympathies were with Austria at the commencement of the struggle, which was watched in Switzerland with intense interest. More especially the Swiss of the German cantons sided with their Suabian and other neighbours, who all had thrown in their lot with Austria. Prussian ways were repugnant to the Swiss, and the action of Prussia in the Neuchâtel affair eleven years before had left behind it very unpleasant recollections. There was, besides, an almost universal belief in the military superiority of Austria. It was confidently expected that her magnificent white-coated battalions and splendid horsemen, under the leadership of the renowned Benedek, would give a good account of the *Pikelhauben*, who, except for the storming of the lines of Düppel, had for years known nothing but the stiff drill of their barrack-yards and exercising grounds. The marvellous machinery of the Prussian organisation and the wonders of the needle-gun had yet to be revealed to the world. I saw a good deal at this time of the Würtemberg *Charge d'Affaires*, Spitzemberg, and his very handsome, clever wife, a daughter of the distinguished statesman, Varnbüler, whom I had known well at Stuttgart. The couple were intensely anti-Prussian, and with my old predilections for everything Austrian we got on very well together on the subject of current events, watching with almost feverish excitement for the telegrams that should tell us of Benedek's triumphant march on Berlin. Our hopes and illusions were

all too roughly dispelled by the astoundingly brief and crushing Sadowa campaign. When I think of the sentiments so openly expressed at this crisis by my friends the Spitzembergs, I cannot but marvel at their subsequent career. Not long after the close of the conflict they were appointed to Berlin, where the "ogre" Bismarck had no more devoted admirers than the Würtemberg Envoy and his brilliant spouse.

The tide of war threatened to roll so near to Swiss territory that the Confederation lined its northern and southern frontiers with troops mobilised for the protection of its neutrality. Fortunately for the Swiss, their military qualities have not been put to the test for many years. Their troops are, however, well spoken of by those who have had opportunities of studying them, though their officers, with the exception of those belonging to the *armes spéciales*, are held to be less efficient, and a strong argument has been thence deduced in favour of the old military capitulations, now strictly prohibited under the Federal Constitution. At the period when some thirty thousand Switzers mounted guard over the principal Continental thrones, Switzerland could reckon on a reserve, as it were, of experienced officers, mostly cadets of great patrician houses—D'Erlachs, Diesbachs, or Wattenwyls—many of whom had seen active service, and who, on returning home, brought back with them the best principles of military science and discipline. I

had, during my stay at Berne, a very kind friend in old M. de Gonzenbach, for many years Permanent Secretary to the Diet, prior to the democratic reform of the Constitution in 1854. This ancient patrician statesman and patriot, the last survival of his class, was fond of enlarging on the above theme, and one day told me of a remark made to him by the late Emperor Napoleon, whom he had known intimately during that potentate's early exile in Switzerland, and who subsequently consulted him on the formation of Swiss regiments for service in France—a measure the Emperor seriously contemplated at one time. "I know your *Allmend*¹ well," the Emperor had said to him, "but what are you able to do there? Very little! It was otherwise in old days. Not a shot could be fired in Europe without Switzerland being taken into account. You were then a great military nation." "The Emperor was quite right," added my friend. "What have we become now? A nation of waiters and porters. When I think of *Suisse* and *portier* being synonymous, *le rouge me monte au visage*."

To the suppression of the capitulations M. de Gonzenbach likewise attributed in part the fact of Switzerland being now so much less in touch with European affairs. It would be difficult, he pointed out, to take up any historical memoirs, down even

¹ The federal manoeuvring ground, or Swiss *Champs de Mars*, at Thun. The Emperor had held a commission in his youth in the cantonal forces of Thurgovia.

to some eighty years ago, without finding there prominent mention of Swiss engaged in the most important military or political transactions of the period, sometimes filling high offices of state, and not infrequently (as in the case of the Genevese) directing the studies of heirs to powerful monarchies. At the present time the Swiss seem to have dropped altogether out of European society, if I may be permitted the expression. There are few representative Swiss left; for the poorly paid, middle-class men who, as a rule, have charge of Swiss interests at three or four foreign capitals, represent their country only by reason of their functions, and in no other respect. My Swiss sage—for such was his acknowledged position among his countrymen—was of opinion that her political isolation had become a distinct disadvantage to Switzerland.

M. de Gonzenbach, as Secretary to the old Diet, had for the time practically had charge of the foreign relations of Switzerland, besides being entrusted with various important diplomatic missions. His recollections of Napoleon III. went back to the days of his restless youth, and he had been a frequent guest of Queen Hortense at Arenenberg. To the last he remained a valued friend and constant correspondent of that very remarkable woman the late Queen Sophie of the Netherlands, who frequently stopped on her way through Switzerland to visit him at his country home at Muri near Berne. M. de Gonzenbach's last days were devoted to the

publication of the memoirs and correspondence of the Maréchal d'Erlach, and it was characteristic of him that in order to get hold of the papers left by the Maréchal, which contained a mass of original letters to and from Louvois and others, he purchased, for a relatively large sum, the entire library of the old château of Spiez on the Lake of Thun when that remnant of Erlach property was sold by its impecunious owner. But I have lingered unduly long over my recollections of the venerable sage of Muri, long forgotten now by all but a very few like Sir Robert Peel, perhaps, who, during his short and brilliant, but somewhat eccentric, diplomatic career at Berne¹ must have seen a good deal of him, more especially at the time of the war of the Sonderbund.

Henry Dering was now transferred to Florence and replaced by Charles Calvert Eden, a nephew of the late Primate of Scotland. Eden, who had been married very young to a Bernese lady of the patrician family of Sinner, had asked to be reappointed to Berne. He was a pleasant, intelligent fellow, and had seen a good deal of the world, having begun life in the navy. In my memory he is chiefly connected with the story of the "bear that ate the Englishman," a ghastly

¹ One of the many stories told of Sir Robert is that, when riding on a hot summer's day by the banks of the Aare, he was minded to have a bathe. Finding, when he came out of the water, that his clothes had been stolen, he calmly mounted his horse and rode into town a diplomatic Godiva (or Godivus!).

incident of which he had been an eye-witness during his first sojourn at Berne. The subject was one he disliked, but I succeeded with some difficulty in extracting from him the particulars of this dreadful occurrence, which, not being generally known, seem worth putting down.

During the winter of 1860-61 there came to Berne a certain Captain Lorch, a Norwegian by birth, who had served in one of our foreign legions during the Crimean War, and had lived a good deal in England. He appears to have been a baddish lot, but, like other adventurers of his kind, was an amusing companion, and soon made friends with the knot of junior *diplomates* who, at that period, frequented a small club at an inn in the Rue de la Justice at the lower end of the town. Here they met of an evening and kept late hours, playing cards and supping afterwards. Lorch was generally the last to leave, and had acquired a curious habit, before retiring to his lodging hard by, of strolling down the street to the well-known pit beyond the Nydeck bridge to "have a look at the bears," which for years past have been kept there at the public charge, as symbols of the *Mutz* or *Bruin* that figures in the coat of arms of the ancient city and canton. One night (March 3, 1861) Eden stayed at the club later than usual, and left it with the Norwegian who had had a run of ill-luck and had drunk pretty freely. Lorch proposed he should accompany him in his customary stroll down to the bears, and a

few minutes' walk through the raw, foggy night brought them to the pit. As the many who have seen it know, it is surrounded by a low, broad wall in the centre of which a railing about breast-high is embedded. The Norwegian, who was in a queer, defiant mood, suddenly startled Eden by taking to vaulting backwards and forwards over the railing. He did this very nimbly, swinging himself over with both hands, in one of which he carried his folded umbrella. While Eden was remonstrating with him on this dangerous tomfoolery, Lorch's foot slipped off the narrow inner edge—or his hand gave way—and he somehow lost his hold and disappeared into the darkness below, coming down with a great thud on reaching the bottom.

Eden called out to him, but getting no answer, thought he must have been killed by the fall. Soon, however, he heard a stir, and peering down into the gloom, perceived, to his relief, that Lorch had risen to his feet and was therefore not fatally injured. He had been stunned at first, having come down flat on his face and broken, as was afterwards ascertained, the bridge of his nose. The fall had, however, completely sobered him, and he seemed quite cool and collected, and remained so, indeed, till the end. He exchanged a few words with Eden as to the best means of extricating himself, the latter undertaking to go for assistance and get, if possible, a ladder. At this hour—close upon three in the morning—not

a creature was stirring, and the bears themselves lay fast asleep in their dens at the back of the pit. Looking around him, Eden espied lights in a house at the upper end of the bridge. There was a bakery there, and some men at work in it. He attracted their notice, but could not make them understand what he wanted of them. They followed him, however, to the pit, with much loud talk in their guttural dialect, but without directing him as to where ladders or ropes could be procured. This proved, indeed, the commencement of the mischief. The noise these men made during their first parley with Eden aroused other people and brought them out of their dwellings. Early though it was, too, peasants coming into town, and now and then a casual passer-by, stopped to learn the motive of this nocturnal concourse.

In less than half-an-hour the edge of the pit was surrounded by a throng of hulking, jeering boors, who, passing their coarse jests from one to another, disturbed the bears in their slumbers and brought them out one by one from their dens. I should observe here that Eden's account of the affair was so strange and disjointed, so like some hideous nightmare, that I am unable to give it in any connected or, still less, succinct shape. To make it as short as possible, no one in the crowd lent any practical help or thought of fetching the bear-keeper, who, unfortunately, happened to live a long way off. The bears, meanwhile, showed no

evil designs, and contented themselves with sniffing at their new companion, who, with perfect nerve and coolness, kept them at a distance by fencing lightly with his umbrella. Eden, now feeling that he must seek assistance elsewhere, hurried up to the Legation, which was upwards of half a mile away, on the Münsterplatz. Here he had great difficulty in gaining admittance to the worthy Admiral, who would not at first give any credence to Eden's strange story, and put his distracted condition down to the effects of drink. Young Edward Harris,¹ however, who was on leave from his regiment, volunteered to accompany him, taking with him his regulation sword. At his suggestion, on their way to the pit, they went to the guard-house and, after much parleying, prevailed on two or three of the gendarmes to come with their rifles.

When the party reached the pit they found the position, on the whole, unchanged. The crowd had greatly increased, and was more uproarious and inane than ever, and no rescue had been attempted. The first streaks of dawn were beginning to show, for Lorch had been some three hours in the pit, and still the bears went slowly round and round, kept at bay by gentle prods from the plucky Norwegian's umbrella. An effort was now made to get the gendarmes to use their rifles, or at any rate to hand one of them down to Lorch. But this they positively declined to do, alleging that they were unloaded, and

¹ The late 4th Earl of Malmesbury.

remaining stolidly inactive till the end. At this stage of the proceedings somebody suggested tying ulsters and overcoats together and letting them down into the pit, and Lorch, laying hold of this sorry substitute for a stout rope, attempted to swarm up the few feet of wall that lay between him and safety. He was half-way up when the clumsy contrivance broke, and had to be hauled up and tied afresh. But the beasts, which had hitherto remained passive, began now to growl and show signs of excitement. When the coats had been let down once more, and Lorch began his second ascent, the biggest of the bears suddenly struck at the poor fellow from behind with his claws, and so terribly lacerated his back as to bring him down helpless to the ground. After this the brutes made short work of it, and though several men—among whom was Edward Harris—at last went down to his assistance, all they could do was to drive the bears off the mangled remains.

So ended this horrible tragedy, one might almost say martyrdom, for such a fate as that of the wretched Lorch, kept for hours in an agony of suspense, finally to be torn to pieces within actual reach of the stupid, unfeeling crowd, was little short of martyrdom, without its dignity and sustaining influences. An inquiry afterwards held into the circumstances only more clearly brought out the strange behaviour of the gendarmes, whose rifles were certainly loaded, but who, sooner than injure what they looked upon as valuable animals

and public favourites, refused to make any attempt to save the unfortunate Norwegian. The whole incident would long ago be utterly forgotten, were it not that in the Museum of Natural History at Berne, among other specimens of the Swiss Fauna, there is, or was some years back, a very large, stuffed bear, which the custodian complacently pointed out to tourists as "the bear that ate the Englishman."

I spent a good part of the autumn of 1866 at Montreux, on the Lake of Geneva, with my brother William and his wife, who had taken up their quarters for a few weeks at the Pension Mooser, a cheap and fairly comfortable establishment of its kind. For eight francs a day one cannot expect much, but the rooms were clean and the food fairly abundant and well cooked. *Pension* life, with its shabby-genteel company, meals in common, and doubtful tablecloths, has always seemed to me a thing to be avoided, but the William Rumbolds in those days were such a pleasant, cheery couple that these minor inconveniences passed unnoticed in their society; and the weather was glorious, as is generally the case at this time of the year on the Leman, the eastern end of which, by the way, is to my mind one of the loveliest corners upon earth. Tempted by these beautiful September days, we planned an expedition over the St. Bernard to Aosta, whence we proposed returning by way of the Col and Glacier of St. Théodule to Zermatt.

The 19th of September was very late in the year for the tour we meditated, but we began it under favourable auspices, breaking the journey at Martigny the first night, and reaching the monastery late the following evening. Our party were fair pedestrians, and the following morning, the weather continuing most favourable, we started on the walk of near upon twenty miles that divided us from Aosta. Very delightful it was, after leaving the frowning masses of rock and gloomy *coulloirs* of this, on the whole, singularly dismal and forbidding pass, gradually to descend through Alpine pastures, and presently through lovely chestnut woods into the bright, smiling Val d'Aosta—its hillsides studded with hamlets perched up high on the most picturesque sites; old fortified towers and slender campaniles marking the prospect here and there—till, in the flood of a most perfect sunset, we reached the ancient Piedmontese city for which we were bound; very footsore and weary, however, for almost every yard of our long day's tramp had been steadily downhill. We rested throughout a hot, quiet Sunday at the Hôtel du Mont Blanc, but towards evening the sky darkened and a violent thunderstorm broke over the city, dashing to the ground all our hopes of working our way round over the high pass of the St. Théodule. The weather was quite broken up; it rained steadily the whole of the following forenoon, and there was nothing for it but to retrace our steps. We drove as far as

St. Rémy at the Italian end of the pass, and thence toiled up to the far-famed monastery once more in a mountain drizzle, which soon turned to snow.

A more uncommon expedition was that in which I took part the following January (1867), and of which I have for many reasons preserved a vivid recollection. By this time—much as I doubted my fitness for married life, and greatly though I held to that independence and freedom from family ties which are almost indispensable to the junior diplomatist—I had seen too much of Carrie Harrington to be any longer in doubt as to my feelings towards her. Early in the winter I proposed to her and was accepted. With the New Year the cold set in with more than common severity, and after a tremendous fall of snow, lasting several days, followed by a very hard frost (the thermometer going down to twenty degrees below the zero of Centigrade), the aspect of all the country round Berne in its fullest winter garb was strikingly beautiful. This induced us to plan a sort of Arctic journey into the heart of the Oberland, which had never, so far as I know, been attempted before. The inns at Interlaken and the other places we wished to see being all closed at this time of year, we had to give previous notice of our intended visit. At Thun we found waiting for us a huge sledge, like a gondola on runners, drawn by three stout horses, which conveniently held our party, composed of the Harringtons and their youngest daughter, Hennessy of the French Embassy, a

Spanish Attaché, young William Harris, and myself. A three-hours' drive through the clear, bitterly keen air, along the shores of the lovely lake, brought us to the Hôtel Bellevue at Interlaken, where we found warm rooms and an excellent dinner. We spent the forenoon of the next day trudging through deep snow all over the familiar place, which looked like some deserted settlement whence the inhabitants had been driven by stress of climate, the numerous inns and lodging-houses being all closed and boarded up against the heavy drifts. In the afternoon we took the Brienz steamer, which we had entirely to ourselves, the scenery through which we passed—at all times of a gloomy grandeur—presenting the weirdest and most fantastic aspect imaginable in the low and lurid winter light. Just as darkness closed in we reached the Giessbach, where the snug little Alpine inn—long since replaced by one of the monster hotels which now disfigure Switzerland—was prepared for us. We spent here a delightful evening, the far-famed falls being lighted up for our benefit and looking wonderfully fine with the changing Bengal lights cast over the masses of snow and huge pinnacles of ice by which they were held captive.

But by far the most striking effect we witnessed during our tour was the following afternoon, while sledging up the valley of the Lutschine to Grindelwald. In the narrower portion of the pass a thick white mist entirely concealed the steep hillsides, and

our procession of small sleighs threaded its way through drifting masses of icy vapour that cut off every prospect thirty yards ahead. Suddenly, at a turn of the road, the gorge opened out, and as if a heavy curtain had been raised by enchantment, we emerged into a flood of sunshine spanned by a perfectly cloudless vault, the three giant peaks of the Eiger, Mönch, and Wetterhorn forming the background, and standing out, robed in purest white down to their base, against a truly Italian sky of deepest blue. The aspect of the village itself was equally striking, only the roofs and eaves of the cottages being visible behind piled-up drifts of snow, fully ten feet high, through which at intervals cuttings were made for the inhabitants to reach their dwellings. The winter stations established of late years in the Engadine, and at other points of the High Alps, have made such scenes comparatively familiar, but I believe that our small party may claim to have been the first explorers of these higher regions at such an unusual time of year.

Shortly after this, in February, I went to Nice to inform my aunt and other relatives wintering there of the change about to take place in my life. The Harringtons joined me here before long, and my little fiancée was warmly welcomed by all my friends. After a stay of a few weeks at Nice I arranged to accompany the Harringtons for part, at least, of an Italian tour they were bent upon making. We started on the 18th of March in that most perfect of

travelling conveyances, a good old-fashioned *vet-turino*, and stopped two nights on the road to Genoa, at San Remo and Finale. At the latter place, the ancient inn, the "Venezia," remains in my memory as the queerest and most original I ever remember to have seen, being a decayed old palazzo with crumbling painted ceilings and huge echoing corridors, withal most comfortably furnished and provided with an excellent cuisine. From Genoa we went by sea to Naples, spending ten or twelve days there, with delightful excursions to Pompeii, Castellamare, and Sorrento. I parted from my fiancée at the railway station at Rome, and thence made the best of my way to England to complete arrangements for my marriage, now fixed for the middle of July.

Calling one day at the Foreign Office on my old friend Percy Anderson, I was asked by him to contribute to a paper which he and others were starting in imitation of the *Owl*, a weekly publication which was then achieving great success, thanks to the share taken in it by men like Evelyn Ashley — who, through his connection with Cambridge House, of course got the best information at first hand—Jim Stuart Wortley, Algernon Borthwick of the *Morning Post*,¹ and others, among whom was Laurence Oliphant, if I am not mistaken. The *Owl*, in fact, first struck out the line which has since been so profitably, though occasionally objectionably, followed by

¹ Now Lord Glenesk.

the so-called "society papers." Our paper, which had been aptly christened *Echoes from the Clubs*, was destined to be short-lived, though not lacking in spirit or enterprise. My connection with it was confined to a couple of contributions¹ which afterwards led to one of the most curious episodes of my diplomatic career, and which I cannot, therefore, leave unnoticed.

The *Owl* had published, a short time before, an apocryphal letter on some political question of the day, with the signature of "Mocquard," the Chef de Cabinet and most confidential servant of Napoleon III. This clever skit had attracted so much attention that the supposed writer thought well to disclaim its authorship. It occurred to me that a fictitious diplomatic correspondence on similar lines might make a good show in the columns of our rival weekly, and I accordingly offered Anderson to try my hand at something of the kind. The French of the Mocquard letter to some extent betrayed its British origin, and I wished to turn out, if possible, something that should more closely resemble the productions of foreign Chanceries. With this view I procured the last blue-book on Polish affairs, and applied myself to a careful study of the style of Prince Gortchakov, who, whatever the wrongs of Poland, had made a most brilliant defence of the position of the

¹ Besides the sham despatches mentioned above, I also wrote a short article, headed "In Memoriam," on the death of my former chief, Sir Frederick Bruce.

Imperial Government in the controversy into which our own Government had somewhat rashly plunged in 1863. I sketched out for myself a sort of diplomatic coalition against England on Irish affairs, instigated by Russia, who would endeavour to secure in it the support of France and the United States. A tit for tat, in short, for our abortive intervention in favour of the Poles in conjunction with the other Powers. The Fenians had been stirring enough of late, and the woes of the most distressful country had been sufficiently aired to afford me a plausible pretext for my imaginary diplomatic campaign, but I need scarcely say that could I have foreseen the serious troubles that lay in store for us in Ireland, I should never have selected such a subject. At that time the jest, however poor, seemed perfectly harmless ; though, looking back upon it now, I am horrified by the impropriety of such a proceeding on the part of a Secretary of Legation of some standing and on the verge of middle age.

In a few days I produced what seemed to me a fairly colourable imitation of the Gortchacoffian periods, and left the manuscript with Anderson, who expressed himself well pleased with it. My despatch, which was addressed to Baron Brunnow in London, after pleading for intervention in favour of the oppressed Irish, stated that similar communications had been sent to the Russian representatives at Paris and Washington, with the object of bringing some common pressure to bear on our Government in a

matter which had now become one of general European concern. On my return to Berne I followed up this production with a despatch from the Marquis de Moustier, at that time at the head of the French Foreign Office, to the French Ambassador in London, Prince de la Tour d'Auvergne. Moustier somewhat contemptuously declined to join in the proposed coalition against "the ally of France," at the same time commenting severely on the audacity of such an overture on the part of Russia after her treatment of her Polish subjects. He took occasion, nevertheless, to enter into a very bitter criticism of our new-fangled theories of non-intervention in Continental affairs, and, above all, of our deplorable tendency to back out at the last moment, as we had done both in the Polish and the Danish questions, and pointed out that our alliance had thus lost much of its value for France. I had taken considerable pains over this last composition, because it gave me an opportunity of expressing what I have all my life strongly felt of the hollowness—the shoddiness I would almost say—of our foreign policy. We scarcely realise, perhaps, how much foreign Governments and foreign opinion build on our readiness finally to yield in any serious controversy in which we become engaged. It would require a good deal now to get it believed abroad that our loudest bark is ever to be followed by a bite.

Both my contributions to *Echoes from the Clubs* having been sent off, and acknowledged with
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thanks in the tangible shape of a small cheque, I thought no more of the matter, firmly believing that my skits had fallen flat and would remain unnoticed. The day fixed for my marriage was drawing near, and, as may well be supposed, I had plenty to occupy my thoughts. One morning, however, towards the end of June, on taking up the leading Berne newspaper, the *Bund*, I espied in the summary of the news of the day, in which the more salient items are indicated in bigger type, the words *Irische Frage* (Irish Question), followed by a complete analysis of my Gortchacow despatch taken *au grand sérieux*, and characterised by the editor as a document of grave import, since it foreshadowed the opening up of a new European question of the first magnitude! That influential organ of South German opinion, the *Augsburger Allgemeine*, had been led to notice my absurd production, and it thereupon went the round of the German, and finally of the French, papers, creating so much stir that the Russian Chancellerie deemed it advisable to deny its authenticity officially in the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*. This occurred about three weeks later, and thus ended the first part of an episode which was to have a highly interesting sequel so far as I was concerned.

It was now settled that the wedding should take place on the 15th of July. "Tommy" Grosvenor,¹ who

¹ The Hon. Thomas George Grosvenor, C.B., son of the 1st Lord Ebury ; died in 1886.

some months before had succeeded Eden, was to be my best man, he and I having struck up a great friendship. I owe him more than a passing mention, for never was a nicer fellow in our service, or one more deservedly popular. After greatly distinguishing himself by his venturesome journey through the heart of China in search of the unfortunate Margary, and when he had before him every prospect of a brilliant career, it was hard to be cut off in his prime at St. Petersburg. Next to poor Henry Wodehouse, and—of a much later standing—Mungo Herbert, I can call to mind no more charming colleague.

I was married on what seemed to me the most radiant day of a glorious July, in a large room at the Legation, the two eldest Harris young ladies acting as bridesmaids. It was a very quiet function, in keeping with the dear little girl who, from that day, was my devoted, faithful companion for five and a half brief, cloudless years. We started in the afternoon for Lucerne, and tarried for three or four days at the Luzernerhof, on the shores of the loveliest of Swiss lakes. Here, by the way, my father-in-law telegraphed to me the official denial in the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg* of my Gortchacow despatch, an announcement which both amused and amazed me. We left Lucerne, still favoured by perfect weather, for Fluelen, and drove thence over the pass of the St. Gothard, another magnificent road, since consigned to decay and oblivion by the opening of the

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stupendous railway line which burrows through the greater part of its splendid scenery. We broke our *vetturino* journey at Hospenthal and Bellinzona, and went on to the Italian lakes; first to Lugano, and thence to Stresa on the Lago Maggiore. It proved an ideal honeymoon trip, cut all too short by prudential considerations of expense, and we ere long retraced our steps by Bellinzona. Thence we crossed the Bernardino, a very grand but sombre and little frequented pass which joins on to the Splügen near the entrance to the Via Mala, stopping the first night at a strange, desolate inn at the summit of the Bernardino, and the next day at that lovely spot Thusis. From Thusis we worked our way back by Coire and Zurich to Berne, which we reached on the 3rd of August.

Very snug and enticing our little home looked when we got back to it. Some coloured photographs I still have give a good idea of our sitting-room and of the charming prospect from its windows, which took in the distant view of the great Oberland chain. I had just begun then in a small way to collect china, having been inoculated with that mania by Philip Currie who, some time before, stayed with me for a few days, during which we together poked about in the curiosity shops under the Berne arcades. My photograph clearly shows a few ornaments that have since followed me about through all my many wanderings. Fragile though they be they still survive, while all the simple, sunny past to which they

belonged has been buried now so long that it is hard for me to realise that I myself formed part and parcel of it.

I am tempted here to say a few words more of my china-collecting craze. At Geneva I heard of a tea and coffee service of old Dresden of the best period, which was offered for sale by its owner at what seemed a very moderate price. There was an interesting story attaching to it which induced me to buy it. The owner—a Madame de Wautier, *née* de Lentulus—was the last descendant of a Bernese patrician [of that name who had been one of the generals of Frederick the Great, and, on his marriage with a German lady of very high rank, had been presented by that monarch with a large service of the finest Dresden (painted with Watteau groups *en camaïeu*), of which my tea-set was the only remaining portion. Talking of china and curiosity dealers, I nowhere see now quaint Jew shops like that of Woog under the arcades at Berne, full of ancient rubbish, among which it was a pleasure to ferret about, with the certainty of lighting in the end on something good at a really reasonable price compared to what would be asked nowadays. I have in my modest collection a few bits of old Frankenthal and Ludwigsburg, picked up for a song about this time, which are now worth many times what I gave for them. The real pleasures and opportunities of the bric-à-brac hunter are things of the past.

In the autumn of this year an important change took place in the Legation by the promotion of my kindly chief to the Hague. To both of us the departure of the Harrises was a very great loss. Fortunately for us the Admiral was succeeded by John Savile Lumley, with whom we soon established most pleasant relations, and who showed us much kindness during the few months we served under him. He had been a victim of the Austro-Prussian War of the previous year. From St. Petersburg, where he was Secretary of Embassy, he had been named Minister Plenipotentiary at Dresden, one of the snuggest of German posts, with a salary of £2000 a year. His appointment was made out in June, on the very eve of the war, when King John had already thrown in his lot with Austria, and with part of his faithful army was encamped in Bohemia. Lumley somehow delayed presenting his credentials, and, hostilities breaking out almost immediately, never succeeded in obtaining an audience to deliver them. When, in consequence of the new arrangements that followed upon the war, our Government determined to suppress the minor missions at Stuttgart, Frankfort, Hanover, and Dresden—the most crushing blow, by the way, ever dealt to the service—it was easy, as regarded Lumley, to cancel an appointment which, in strict diplomatic usage, had never been completed. He was fortunate, therefore, in obtaining so soon afterwards the vacancy at Berne.

Amiable and warm-hearted to a fault, our new chief soon made himself as popular at Berne as he afterwards became at Brussels and Rome. I had never met him before, though I had been friends for years with his younger brother Augustus. Augustus and I had gone through our first season in London together, and his father, who had been one of my uncle Rancliffe's earliest friends¹—and, by the way, had witnessed the will by which Rancliffe left everything away from his family—had been kind to me in old days. As for John Lumley, success and wealth came to him all too late after a life of considerable hardship. He had none the less often helped that most popular of *paniers percés*, Augustus, out of his difficulties, and having been passed over in favour of this younger brother, his liberality deserves all the greater praise. Shortly after his arrival at Berne he was joined by the widow of his clergyman brother, Frederick, a handsome, pleasant woman with two nice daughters and a son,² and during the winter months the hospitalities of the Legation were abundant. Lumley, whose artistic talents are well known, had decorated the house with a number of clever copies of the best known pictures at Madrid and the Hermitage.

Our *corps diplomatique* numbered in its ranks at this time two exceedingly attractive ladies, namely, the wife of the Belgian Chargé d'Affaires,

¹ John, 8th Earl of Scarborough.

² Now Lord Savile.

Prince de Caraman Chimay, who in later years became head of the Foreign Office at Brussels, and Madame de Villeneuve, wife of the Brazilian Minister. The Princesse de Caraman, *née* de Montesquiou, *fine fleur du Faubourg St. Germain*, was both talented and charming, and, next to Madame Kalergis, her rendering of the compositions of Chopin, whose pupil she had been, was the most perfect I ever heard. As for Madame de Villeneuve, she was, I suppose, one of the most radiantly beautiful women of her time, and as clever and agreeable as she was handsome. She preserved her looks till very late in life, and for many years her house was the great centre of attraction of the Belgian capital. With such elements as these in our society, this, our last winter at Berne, proved anything but dull.

A strange occurrence, of which some mention would certainly be found in the Legation Archives at Berne, must find its place here. In the autumn of 1867 Lumley received a private letter from Lord Stanley¹ giving him notice that an American named Van Quellen, of German or Dutch extraction, would shortly call upon him, having important disclosures to make on matters connected with the Fenian conspiracy and directly affecting the safety of the Queen. Van Quellen, who was living at Mulhouse, had written on the subject to the Duke of Cambridge, but had been advised by Colonel

¹ Afterwards Earl of Derby, at that time Foreign Secretary.

Macdonald¹ to impart what he had to say to the nearest British representative. Van Quellen—whom Lumley described as about fifty, of highly respectable appearance and very quiet and earnest in manner—turned up a day or two later and unfolded his tale, and a very extraordinary one it was. He said that he had long been associated with a vast revolutionary organisation in the United States, calling itself the Selenites (Moonlighters?), whose original object it had been to restore the Southern States to their former position in the American Union, but who had since extended their action to Europe, where they were working for the subversion of all monarchical government. As Vice-President of the Council of three hundred directing this secret organisation, he had got to know all their designs. He had recently come to Europe and married the daughter of one of the wealthiest manufacturers at Mulhouse, and partly her and partly his abhorrence of certain resolutions passed by the Council since he left America, had induced him to reveal what he knew of the schemes of the Society he had now renounced.

The failure of the recent Republican movement under Garibaldi,² he said, had exasperated the more extreme section of the Selenites. Their efforts were

¹ Colonel the Hon. James Macdonald, so popular in London society, and at that time Military Secretary to the Commander-in-Chief.

² The battle of Mentana and Garibaldi's *internement* at Caprera had taken place shortly before.

now directed to the extermination of the rulers who controlled the military forces against which they were contending in vain. With this view their more immediate object was to destroy all royal palaces, together with their inmates. Their intended victims, according to Van Quellen, included our Queen, the French Emperor, the King of Prussia, and one or two minor sovereigns; the Emperor Alexander, who was afterwards so infamously done to death by the Nihilists, strangely enough not being mentioned in the list of proscription. The most curious part, however, of these revelations was the description given of instruments of destruction, invented, so Van Quellen said, by certain Germans of the name of Hoffman, which almost exactly answer to the formidable explosives, such as dynamite and nitro-glycerine, of which we have since heard so much. Besides these, Van Quellen spoke of a chemical compound which, when ignited, produced instantaneously suffocating fumes, and, thrown in hand-grenades in front of advancing troops, would completely paralyse them. Such was, in brief, the substance of this strange informer's statements. He left with Lumley a paper containing a detailed statement of the Fenian organisation in the United Kingdom—affiliated, he said, to the Selenites—which he put at 60,000 in all, with 122 centres. He did not hint at any remuneration for his statements, and offered to go to England—although, by so doing, he would incur a great risk

—to give fuller particulars of these nefarious designs, which, he said, included a general rising in the following January (1868).

We heard no more of Van Quellen, and naturally concluded that he was either mad or had some secret motive for passing off a gigantic hoax on her Majesty's Government. But meeting, a few months later, Sir James Fergusson—then Under Secretary of the Home Department—at a State ball at Buckingham Palace, I learnt from him that Van Quellen had been in England, and had furnished really valuable information. The strangest circumstance of all, however, was that he had left a great deal of luggage at one of the arrival stations in London, where it still remained unclaimed, and that he himself had not been heard of since. The police in fact, said Fergusson, strongly suspected that he had been made away with, one or two mysterious murders having taken place about that time.

In February 1868 we went to Nice for a few weeks, partly for my wife's health. Here I quite unexpectedly heard from Sanderson¹ that Lord Stanley had appointed me to the Secretaryship of Embassy at St. Petersburg. I was, of course, glad of this promotion and of the increased emoluments it brought with it. I had now been nineteen years in the service, and, but for the short time I had held

¹ Sir Thomas Sanderson, G.C.B., now Permanent Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs.

my Chinese appointment, my salary had never exceeded £400 a year. But more of this anon. We promptly returned to Berne to break up our small establishment, and I then took my wife over to England, where she was presented at Court. The London doctors being of opinion that her constitution, never very robust, would be the better for a spell of mountain air, we decided, before proceeding to our northern post, to go for a month to the charming inn at the Giessbach. From here I went for my last Swiss walking-tour with Mr. Harrington and his son, Edward (long since dead), over the Grimsel Pass to the Glacier du Rhône, and from Vissch ascended the Eggischhorn. The prospect from the summit of that mountain over the huge Aletsch Glacier, with the tiny, dark-blue Märjelen Sea lying like a sapphire in the lap of all the wilderness of rock and ice, and the background formed by the colossal masses of the great Bernese range, is unique of its kind and never to be forgotten. We returned over the splendid Gemmi Pass to Kandersteg, and thence to Berne. The first week in August saw us on the road to St. Petersburg, *via* Berlin and Königsberg, in beautiful, but exceedingly hot, weather.

APPENDIX TO CHAPTER XXI

REPRINT OF TWO LETTERS ORIGINALLY PUBLISHED
IN "ECHOES FROM THE CLUBS," IN 1867

PRINCE GORTCHACOW *to* BARON BRUNNOW

SAINT-PÉTERSBOURG, 9-21 mai 1867.

MONSIEUR LE BARON,—L'heureuse issue de la conférence réunie à Londres pour régler le sort futur du grand-duché de Luxembourg donne lieu d'espérer que nous entrons dans une ère de paix et de conciliation.

Le cabinet impérial se plaît à reconnaître les services réels que le gouvernement de Sa Majesté Britannique a rendus dans cette circonstance au repos et au bien-être de l'Europe en prenant l'initiative de cette conférence. En constatant l'heureux résultat d'efforts sincères ayant pour but d'épargner à l'Europe une guerre dont nous ne pouvions prévoir ni l'étendue ni les résultats, nous pensons qu'en suivant la même voie dans d'autres questions intéressants l'humanité tout entière, on parviendrait non-seulement à écarter les conflits internationaux, mais même à tarir les sources de péril universel qu'offrent certaines questions qui, au premier abord, paraissent ne troubler que la paix intérieure de quelques États, mais qui, examinées de plus près, renferment des éléments de danger pour tous.

Deux questions frappent tout d'abord l'observateur désintéressé des événements du jour : — la question de Candie, sur laquelle vous n'ignorez pas les sentiments de notre auguste maître et de la nation russe tout entière ; la question irlandaise, qui nous paraît au moins aussi digne d'intérêt.—On nous objectera peut-être que les affaires

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d'Irlande, en tant qu'elles ne concernent que les rapports existant entre le gouvernement britannique et ses sujets irlandais, ne peuvent donner lieu à une question européenne proprement dite.—Notre réponse à cette objection est fort simple.—On a créé, il y a quelques années, une question polonaise ;—les gouvernements de France et d'Angleterre ont à cette époque suscité contre nous une coalition diplomatique ayant pour but d'intervenir dans cette soi-disant question, sous le prétexte spacieux des traités, mais en réalité au nom de l'humanité souffrante, d'une nationalité opprimée, d'une croyance religieuse persécutée.

Bien que repoussant toute ingérence étrangère portant atteinte aux droits souverains de notre auguste maître, le gouvernement impérial a, vous le savez, accepté, avec une modération à laquelle l'opinion publique a rendu pleinement justice, l'examen en commun des événements du royaume de Pologne.—Je n'ai pas besoin de vous rappeler l'issue de cet examen ; les gouvernements étrangers ont pu se convaincre des intentions paternelles de notre auguste maître envers tous ses sujets sans distinction de race ou de croyance.—La prétendue question polonaise est retombée dans le néant, et depuis longtemps la Pologne offre à l'Europe le spectacle du calme le plus complet, de l'harmonie la plus parfaite entre l'administration et les administrés.

Mais si les gouvernements français et anglais ont, selon nous, créé une question polonaise qui n'existe pas, nous pouvons déclarer avec vérité n'avoir pour rien contribué à créer la question irlandaise, qui existe malheureusement depuis des siècles, et qui de nos jours, et tout récemment encore, a pris des proportions aussi déplorables qu'alarmantes.—Nous ne chercherons pas ici à faire un parallèle entre les prétendues souffrances de la Pologne et celles si véritables de l'Irlande.—La presse anglaise, avec une franchise qui l'honneure, rapporte jour par jour les faits qui font foi de ces souffrances.—Depuis près de deux ans les garanties constitutionnelles dont le peuple anglais se plaît tant à s'enorgueillir ont cessé d'exister pour le peuple d'Irlande ; les soulèvements se succèdent, étouffés à grand'-

peine par des forces militaires écrasantes; et malgré l'application la moins scrupuleuse de mesures répressives les plus énergiques, les campagnes sont en proie au terrorisme, l'insurrection grandit tous les jours dans le cœur de la nation, et les arrêts de mort prononcés journellement par les tribunaux anglais sont accueillis avec défi et sans crainte par un peuple héroïque et indomptable.—Ces faits, je le répète, sont empruntés aux narrations anglaises elles-mêmes. Il y a donc là, on ne saurait le nier, une question grosse de dangers pour l'empire britannique, menaçante pour le monde entier, intéressé à toute catastrophe qui frapperait au cœur le plus grand foyer de l'industrie moderne.

Je n'ai pas le projet, dans cette communication confidentielle, de m'étendre sur les griefs si réels du peuple irlandais.—Lord Russell a dans le temps posé que la base de tout gouvernement "est la confiance qu'il inspire aux gouvernés, et que l'ascendant de la loi sur l'arbitraire doit être le fondement de l'ordre et de la stabilité."—Ces principes, auxquels nous souscrivons, sont-ils la base de l'autorité anglaise en Irlande?—et n'y voyons-nous pas plutôt un exercice de l'arbitraire qui frappe d'autant plus péniblement l'esprit qu'il se trouve être en flagrante contradiction avec les libertés si vantées du régime britannique?

Je me réserve de traiter plus tard les différents points qui nous paraissent former le nœud de la question irlandaise:—la position si cruellement ironique faite à l'Église établie au sein d'une population catholique; l'asservissement d'une nation celtique au profit d'une oligarchie saxonne; les rapports si injustes entre les propriétaires fonciers et leurs tenanciers; l'émigration, enfin—ce renoncement volontaire d'un peuple tout entier aux douceurs de la patrie—fait unique dans l'histoire et qui résume à lui seul toutes les douleurs—chacun de ces points nous semble mériter l'examen le plus sérieux.—Il y a là, selon nous, ample matière à une enquête de la part des puissances, semblable à celle qui eut lieu pour les affaires du Liban et à celle que le gouvernement français nous propose aujourd'hui sur les événements de Candie.—Je reviendrai prochainement sur ce sujet.—J'ai voulu d'abord

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faire connaître à Votre Excellence quels sont les sentiments dont le gouvernement impérial est animé envers l'Irlande, et je me bornerai à ajouter que j'ai adressé une communication semblable à l'ambassadeur de l'empereur à Paris, ainsi qu'à son envoyé à Washington, en vue d'obtenir un échange d'idées avec les gouvernements de France et des États-Unis au sujet de la situation de ce malheureux pays.

Recevez, &c.

(Signed) GORTCHACOW.

THE MARQUIS DE MOUSTIER TO THE PRINCE DE LA
TOUR D'AUVERGNE

PARIS, le 15 juin 1867.

PRINCE.—Dans le cours d'un des entretiens que j'ai eus récemment avec le prince Gortschakoff, et pendant lesquels le vice-chancelier a passé tour à tour en revue les points intéressants de la situation politique actuelle, il a été entre autres fait allusion à la question irlandaise.—Le prince, qui n'ignore pourtant pas les sentiments du gouvernement français sur cette question,—sentiments dont il a pu se convaincre par la réponse que j'ai dû faire à ses premières ouvertures, et dont j'ai dans le temps fait part à Votre Excellence,—est revenu avec une certaine ténacité sur les arguments contenus dans sa dépêche du 21 mai.—Je crois donc utile de vous donner ici un résumé de la nouvelle réponse déclinatoire que je lui ai faite verbalement.

J'ai dit au vice-chancelier de Russie qu'il ne se méprenait pas sur l'intérêt qu'en France on portait aux populations catholiques de l'Irlande.—La France, qui cherche partout à sauvegarder les intérêts des nationalités souffrantes et des croyances opprimées, et dont l'épée pèsera toujours dans la balance du côté le plus faible et le plus digne d'appui, la France, pas plus que la Russie, ne pouvait voir d'un œil indifférent le fâcheux état de l'Irlande.—Mais si je m'associais volontiers aux sentiments humanitaires du prince

Gortschakoff, je ne pouvais m'empêcher de lui répéter que, ainsi que je le lui avais déjà fait dire, j'étais surpris de le voir chercher à mettre en parallèle la Pologne et l'Irlande. —Les événements du royaume de Pologne, ainsi qu'il se plait à les appeler, sont d'un souvenir trop récent encore pour que le cabinet russe ait intérêt à y puiser des arguments contre l'administration plus ou moins défectueuse d'autres États.—L'attentat si odieux et si déplorable du 6 de ce mois m'imposait nécessairement une grande réserve en l'entretenant de ce qui touchait à la Pologne, mais je ne pouvais admettre un instant, sans craindre de sortir des bornes d'une discussion amicale, que l'attitude du gouvernement russe envers ses sujets polonais pût servir d'enseignement au gouvernement britannique en Irlande.—Au reste, je me bornai à rappeler au prince la réponse que je lui avais déjà transmise par M. le baron de Talleyrand, et je lui réitérai notre refus de nous associer à une ingérence dans la politique intérieure de l'Angleterre qui prendrait sous ses auspices, presque les proportions d'une coalition contre cette puissance, notre amie et alliée.—Mon entretien avec le vice-chancelier prit dès lors un autre cours.

Il est néanmoins bien regrettable que l'état de l'Irlande puisse prêter raison, en quelque sorte, à une critique aussi peu bienveillante que celle du prince Gortschakoff, et c'est à ce sujet que j'ai désiré vous adresser quelques réflexions toutes confidentielles.

Le gouvernement anglais a inauguré depuis quelques années une politique nouvelle.—S'appuyant d'une part sur la position géographique de l'Angleterre et sur ses vastes intérêts extraeuropéens, de l'autre sur les exigences impérieuses d'un commerce qui absorbe toutes les forces et toutes les facultés de la nation, il en est arrivé presque à dire que ce que l'on est convenu d'appeler les questions européennes ne devait plus trouver en lui qu'un spectateur froid et indifférent.—Cette politique a porté les fruits qu'on en pouvait attendre.—Grâce à elle, l'Angleterre n'a-t-elle pas perdu la plus grande partie de son poids en Europe ? et ne l'avons-nous pas vue deux fois, dans les affaires polon-

aises d'abord, dans le conflit danois ensuite, commencer, comme par une tradition mal désapprise, une série de remontrances trop tôt rendues nulles par l'aveu de sa détermination de ne quitter en aucun cas le terrain de la discussion pour celui de l'action ?

Bien que nous regrettions sincèrement de voir se retirer du concert européen une influence qui souvent a rendu d'éminents services à la cause de l'ordre, et au respect trop méconnu aujourd'hui des engagements pris, il ne nous appartient pas de passer un jugement sur cette politique, qui paraît d'ailleurs goûlée de la nation britannique, livrée tout entière aux occupations d'un commerce de jour en jour plus lucratif.—Mais il semble que du moment où un gouvernement a posé en principe qu'il lui convient de s'occuper uniquement de questions intérieures, et de vouer toute son énergie au développement des institutions politiques et du bien-être matériel du pays, il assume une double responsabilité de bien faire dans cette sphère qu'il a choisie.—L'opinion publique en Angleterre a peut-être besoin d'être éclairée sur ce point.—Si l'on doit se résigner en Europe à voir l'Angleterre disparaître peu à peu, par une abdication volontaire, du terrain des intérêts communs, on n'en suivra qu'avec plus d'attention l'exécution du programme qu'elle s'est tracé chez elle.—En France, on trouve avec raison que l'Angleterre, plus qu'aucune autre puissance, est pour ainsi dire engagée d'honneur à étendre les bienfaits d'une administration équitable à toutes les populations placées sous son sceptre, et l'on ne saurait nier que jusqu'ici l'Irlande n'a eu qu'une faible part de ces bienfaits.

Quant à nous, pour résumer toute ma pensée, nous avons vu jusqu'à ce jour dans l'Angleterre une puissance dont l'amitié nous était précieuse à plus d'un titre, et nous ne voulons pas prévoir que le cours des événements puisse nous amener à sortir de la réserve que nous nous imposons actuellement à l'égard de la situation de l'Irlande.—Nous ne voudrions pas, en voyant se perpétuer ses maux, que nos sympathies depuis longtemps acquises au peuple irlandais nous disposassent à rechercher si la politique d'abstention

de l'Angleterre n'a pas de beaucoup diminué pour nous les avantages de son alliance.

Je n'ai pas besoin de vous dire que cette dépêche est absolument confidentielle.

Agréez, &c.

(Signed) MOUSTIER.

CHAPTER XXII

ST. PETERSBURG, 1868-1869

THE Prussian and Russian frontier stations at Eydkuhnen and Wirballen, or Wierzbolowo, are separated only by a run of a few minutes. Yet, among the varieties of travel, I know few more remarkable than the sense of complete change of scene experienced on alighting from the train that has brought one to this threshold of the vast Muscovite realm. The first thing of which you are made aware is your being in the land of the *moujik*. A swarm of these uncouth, hirsute creatures, in their picturesque loose shirts, baggy trousers, and high boots, take the carriages by assault, bringing with them the first whiff of that peculiar odour compounded of tar, Russia leather, and stale cigarette smoke, which pursues you ever after wherever you may wander in the dominions of the Czar. Then, too, the railway officials in trim military uniform, with their bulging, flat white caps, the semi-Oriental aspect of the station buildings, and most of all the unfamiliar characters in which the notices and directions are written up—all is in such marked contrast to what you have left behind you but a few minutes before that it seems

like passing suddenly, without any preparation, into a strange and differently ordered world. You feel as though you might be stepping out of a balloon rather than out of a railway compartment.

Travelling in an official capacity, we were certain to receive every attention at the frontier, but I am bound to say that nowhere is the properly accredited traveller treated with greater civility than in Russia; while as for comfort, the trains were, in those days, far better appointed and more luxurious than those of Western Europe. After some stay, devoted to examination of passports and luggage, during which we became acquainted with such Russian delicacies as the toothsome *rabitchick*, or *gelinotte*, and those delicious *agurtsi* (salted cucumbers)—the food at the railway stations is remarkably good—we started on our twenty-four hours' journey to our destination.

The weather was oppressively hot, and the temperature apparently rose the farther we went north; much too hot for refreshing sleep, the prolonged northern daylight—which to me, I confess, is very wearisome—helping to keep us awake. Almost all through the sultry night we watched the dreary tracts of stunted forest and hard-baked plain, alternating with bog and marsh, through which the train went lumbering at anything but express speed. When the light faded during the brief interval before daybreak, we became aware that we were passing through what seemed a belt of fire, the

woods along the line having been set alight in many places by the excessive drought, and even the peat and moss close by the rails burning fiercely here and there. There is a dreadful sameness about the long stretch of country that divides the capital from the German frontier, and, but for a stoppage for breakfast and lunch at Pskow, and Luga, the tediousness of our journey was unbroken. Even the blazing August sun failed to brighten the cheerless prospect.

At last, about seven in the evening of the 10th, we reached the terminus at Petersburg, where the Embassy had made arrangements for our reception, and were jolted over the most execrable of pavements, along what seemed interminable streets, to our quarters in the distant Zacharewskaia. Here, in an apartment kindly placed at our disposal by Constantine Phipps, then on leave of absence, we were to stay until we could set up a home of our own. Going out on the balcony that evening in search of a little fresh air, we were literally driven in, and obliged to close the windows, by the acrid smoke coming from the burning woods all along the Gulf of Finland, with which the atmosphere was charged. We were too tired to take much notice of anything, but to find ourselves in a torrid zone, on the verge of the Arctic circle, was certainly a singular experience.

Things in general looked more promising the next day. Although, to be seen at its best, Peters-

burg should be visited for the first time in winter, the aspect of the town in such splendid weather was nevertheless very striking. The noble river, with its long range of quays lined with handsome buildings; the enormous pile of the Winter Palace, and, facing it across the water, the sombre mass of the Fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul; the vast square or plain behind the Palace, with the spire of the Admiralty and the great dome of Isaacs resplendent with gilding; the immense width of the thoroughfares, showing an indifference to space truly typical of the colossal Empire—all made an impression of grandeur and magnificence which few modern capitals can produce. To come upon all this splendour, after traversing lonely, half-populated wastes which seemed the most fitting possible approach to the North Pole, was a sensation for which we were scarcely prepared.

Our Embassy, situated at the corner of the Quai de la Cour and the Champ de Mars, just opposite the Troitzki bridge, occupies the bigger half of a great mansion belonging to Prince Soltikow. It was just then untenanted, the Buchanans spending the short summer months at Ligovo on the road to Peterhof. I never had kinder chiefs than the Buchanans. Sir Andrew, with his slight, erect figure, handsome features, and abundant snow-white hair, his old-world courtesy, yet simple, cordial ways, looked every inch her Majesty's Ambassador. A great experience of affairs, and a cautious

and eminently conciliatory disposition, made him a most useful and reliable agent, under those modern conditions of diplomacy which tend to discourage rather than favour initiative, and have, as was aptly said by a distinguished Envoy, reduced the British representative to a sort of glorified Foreign Office clerk at the end of a telegraph wire. Yet Sir Andrew was far from lacking vigour and independence of judgment, as he well showed a couple of years later, when the Russian Government so audaciously denounced the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris. At heart, however, he was wedded to sport rather than to diplomacy, and, whatever the weather, seldom missed a day with the hounds, which were then kept at Gorilovo, not far from his country abode.

As for Lady Buchanan—the sister of my old Paris colleague William Stuart—I should indeed be ungrateful did I not preserve a lively memory of her goodness to us. She was in every way interesting and original. Her style of dress and her accent in French were all her own, and no one but the *grande dame par excellence* she was could have carried them off as she did. But the easy dignity of her manners, her quick intelligence and ready wit, had established for her the best possible position at Petersburg, and especially the promptness with which she met anything like an impertinence or a liberty insured for her universal respect. She, moreover, gained the affectionate regard of all who

knew her sterling qualities, while the laxer elements in society stood in wholesome awe of her. Of her caustic powers she gave an amusing instance some years later at Vienna, where, referring to the frequency of official mournings, and the limited number of Court entertainments, she said to one of the archdukes: “Dites-moi, Monseigneur! Pourquoi nous associez-vous si souvent à vos douleurs et jamais à vos joies??” In the Buchanan couple the majesty of England had altogether very fitting representatives, and there was a subtle but appreciative pleasantry in an admirable caricature done of them by Vsevolovsky of the Russian Foreign Office, in which they figured as the supporters to the royal arms; Sir Andrew’s abundant silver locks and whiskers well rendering the mane of the British lion, while my lady, very tall and thin, with her long, old-fashioned ringlets, stood admirably for that curious, high-bred looking creature, the unicorn. We became frequent visitors at Ligovo, habitually meeting there a small set composed of a few of the *chers collègues* and one or other of Lady Buchanan’s intimates. Among the latter, Princesse Dina Suworow—a perfect and very attractive specimen of the highly educated, somewhat *émancipée* Russian young lady, and grand-daughter of the renowned Field-Marshal—was a great favourite with the whole of our Embassy. Here I first became acquainted with men like Jomini, of the Imperial Foreign Office, the ablest writer in Prince Gortchacow’s

Chancery ; the young and popular (Sacha) Benkendorff, whose mother, a Princess Cröy, I had known well at Stuttgart;¹ and Annenkoff, who later on made a name for himself by laying the railway from the Caspian across Central Asia.

I had other motives for much frequenting Ligovo. The Buchanans were the tenants of Comtesse Koucheleff Bezborko, who owned there a large estate in the principal house on which she herself spent the summer. This dear old woman—an admirable and almost extinct type of the Russian great lady of old—was Nadine Lobanow's aunt, and at once received us *sur un pied de parenté*. She was a widow and childless, though not unburdened with family cares. One night, some twenty odd years before, two infants had been left in their cradles at the respective doors of her husband and of the banker Stieglitz, two of the wealthiest and most prominent members of Petersburg society. These children had both been taken in and adopted, without the mystery attending their birth ever being, so it was said, cleared up. One of them grew to exceptional beauty and immense wealth in the Stieglitz house on the English Quay, later on marrying M. Polovtzoff, now a Senator of the Empire and an intimate of the Grand Duke Wladimir ; while the other, brought up in all the splendour of the Koucheleff house, married early

¹ Count Alexander Benkendorff has just been appointed Ambassador to our Court.

one of the Galitzines, who turned out a most unmitigated scamp and spendthrift, and did his best to ruin his wife's benefactress and adopted mother. Mania Galitzine—who afterwards obtained a divorce from her worthless husband and became Marquise Incontri—had, without being pretty, a great deal of charm and cleverness, and was the centre of a small family coterie which gathered round the dear, kind-hearted old Countess, and into which we were at once admitted.

Notwithstanding its wealth and vast landed possessions, evil days had already come upon the House of Kouchleff. The emancipation of the serfs, together with the unjust stewardship of practically irresponsible agents—for in those pre-railway days Russian landlords seldom visited their distant estates or troubled themselves about their management—was bearing its fruits and rapidly impoverishing the land-owning class.¹ The fine old palace at the corner of the Fontanka was still full of lovely furniture and valuable works of art, but year by year Davis or some other London or Paris dealer would appear on the scene, and some unique Sèvres vase or a picture by Greuze would presently be missing, the old Countess observing with a sad smile: “*Vous savez, mon cher, j'ai dû m'en défaire ; on m'en offrait un si beau prix !*” During the three years I spent at Petersburg I saw, as it were, a great part

¹ In one well-authenticated case, estate accounts, extending over eighteen years, were found unopened in the drawers of the owner at his death.

of this beautiful collection disappear piecemeal. Yet, large as it was, it formed only one-third of the enormous accumulation of splendid objects originally brought together by Prince Bezborodko, the Chancellor of Catherine II., during the French Revolution, when, like our own Prince Regent—to whom Windsor owes so many of its treasures—that astute old statesman kept agents in Paris charged to buy up the splendid contents of the homes of the proscribed *noblesse*, thrown on the market by the brutal, ignorant mob which had looted them and murdered their owners. The most exquisite productions of French art in the eighteenth century—priceless furniture by Riesener or Goutière; pictures by Greuze, Boucher, Nattier; Sèvres porcelain and Gobelins of the highest class—made up this magnificent Bezborodko museum, which, as I have said, was so vast as to furnish forth three princely collections, when divided at the death of the Chancellor. It was one of these which I saw so sadly wasting away. But Petersburg at that time was full of tempting bric-à-brac, and one of our favourite amusements was to wander about that semi-Oriental bazaar, the Stchukin Dvor, where in queer old-clothes shops, among heaps of rubbish, one sometimes came upon objects, mostly china, of real value.

Our first visits, however, were made to the neighbouring and more sumptuous Gostinnoi Dvor, with the object of providing ourselves with the indispensable furs—by no means an inexpensive process—against the winter now close at hand.

The approach of that formidable season affords some interesting experiences to the new-comer. In September and October it is amazing to see the interminable string of carts, piled up with fuel fetched from equally numberless barges, moored along the river quays, that have brought down the spoil of the immense woods stretching away behind Ladoga and Onega, to the White Sea or to the borders of Siberia. Boundless though they be, these forests already begin to show signs of exhaustion. The most elementary rules of forestry were till recently neglected in Russia, though the Government have now tardily turned their attention to the matter. No greater calamity can be conceived than a wood famine, if such an expression may be coined, in a region where, for most of the year, existence is a life-and-death struggle with King Frost.

The perfection of the arrangements made to keep out the cold is surprising. By the beginning of October the double windows in all the houses are made air-tight with strips of gummed paper and cotton wool, only one or two squares, according to the size of the room, being left free for ventilation, while a small bottle containing some chemical preparation is placed between the windows to prevent the frost fastening on the outer panes and obstructing the light and view. Throughout the houses, including basement and offices, there are large porcelain stoves let into the walls, and these, lighted early in the morning by a *moujik* told off to

this duty, preserve the heat so perfectly that the fires only require renewal once in twenty-four hours. The result is a perfectly even temperature of some sixty-five degrees (Fahrenheit) pervading the entire house from top to bottom. In fact, really thick clothes indoors are irksome, even when the thermometer outside ranges between fifteen and twenty degrees below freezing-point. All through the endless winter one's life is practically that of a hothouse plant, and a thoroughly unwholesome life it is, though the absence of the slightest sensation of chill is in itself delightful. The Russians have certainly learnt to cope successfully with their terrible climate, although at the cost of health in the higher classes of society, where anaemia, with all its attendant evils, is painfully prevalent.

The first real fall of snow is a thing to be remembered. The horses in your sleigh are pawing impatiently at the door, and dash off, when you have taken your seat, at a pace which only Russian trotters can achieve, plunging through the spotless drifts—soon, alas! to be turned for the rest of the winter into a dirty, hard-frozen surface—and tossing the feathery flakes into your face. The air is perfectly still, and, above and below, everything is of a virgin white. One more turn and you are in the heart of the huge Nevski Prospekt, its entire width crowded with sleighs of every description, mostly driven like your own at top speed. The early northern darkness has already set in, and this

throng of vehicles noiselessly gliding phantom-like through it—bells to sledges being strictly tabooed in Russia—produces a weird, fantastic effect. The almost complete quietness with which the busy traffic is carried on is one of its most striking features. Hardly a sound breaks the silence, except now and then a short, low cry from the drivers, “Padi, padi” (Make room), or “Beregiss” (Take care). Through the gloom, partially relieved by the intense white all round, the eye is attracted by the immense painted sign-boards that overhang the shops high above the side-walks, depicting in mediæval fashion the wares to be found within, together with the names of the owners and their trades in huge gilt letters of the picturesque Russian character. The entire scene is novel to a degree to the traveller from Western Europe. Later on, too, when the bitter frost has made good its iron grip on this northern world, its gradual inroads on the broad waters of the Neva are a wonderful sight. The ice-floes come down from Ladoga, thickening day by day, till they fill the whole current and are fast wedged into a solid mass. By this time the floating bridges, respectively facing the Champ de Mars and the Liteinia, have been removed, and the entire stretch of the splendid stream has become an immense snow-field. Presently well-defined tracks are made across this, with lamp-posts to mark them at night, and you sleigh to and from the fortress and the wide-

stretching island suburbs beyond, the bosom of the river being so firmly ice-bound that soon it is used as a course for the Sunday trotting races, or an occasional parade-ground for the Czar's big battalions.

Long ere this we had succeeded in housing ourselves, though it had been no easy matter. So many Russian families winter abroad for health that we had an ample choice of furnished apartments. But even the most attractive of these did not bear close inspection, the bedrooms and offices being, in too many Russian houses, sacrificed to the reception rooms. In the end, after much fruitless search, we pitched upon a small one-storeyed wooden house in the Sergievskiaia, of very unpretending appearance, but affording excellent accommodation. Here we made ourselves thoroughly cosy and comfortable, and occasionally gave little dinners, one of which I may mention as being in honour of that most absolutely charming of artists, Mario de Candia, this being, I think, the last season he was engaged at Petersburg. The Buchanans, Princesse Lise Troubetzkoi, and Princesse Léon Kotchoubey were of the party, and, *sans se faire trop prier*, dear old Mario sang two or three things of his *répertoire*, as he alone could still sing in a room. Between each song, however, I had to take him to my dressing-room for a few whiffs of the strongest of cigars, so much was he the slave to the passion for smoking, by which he destroyed his voice and

undermined his constitution. I still have his photograph, given me then, with the chaffy dedication : "Al Sigre Horace Rumbold il vecchio rivale tenoreggiante pregandolo non Limenticarlo anche spento."

Here, too, long before the tardy daylight of a February morning of 1869 (the 5th) began to show itself, my eldest boy was born. His first experience in life has fixed itself in my memory by its very absurdity. Within a minute of his birth the admirable doctor who presided at it suddenly snatched him up and carried him to the wash-stand, where, pouring water into a glass, he took a gulp of it, and, to my horror, deliberately spat it into the wretched infant's face, making it sneeze and sputter and give clear indications of a vitality which, as he afterwards explained to me, he at first almost feared was wanting. Ignominious treatment this, at the dawn of life, for one who has since proved himself the best of sons and is now making a good name for himself in our service. But I owe more than a passing tribute to Doctor Krassofski, the Locock of St. Petersburg, and one of the kindest and most skilful of physicians. I well remember how he astonished us by calling, the first time he was sent for, in full general's uniform¹ with epaulettes, cocked hat and feathers, &c. He had just come from some Grand Duchess, being a great favourite with the Imperial family, most of whose

¹ His rank in the Russian official scale, or *tchin*, no doubt answered to that of Major-General.

junior members he had ushered into the world. None the less, as he frankly confessed to me, his Polish extraction had always told against him, and he could not help feeling that he was, in consequence, an object of suspicion.

At the end of March the Buchanans went on long leave of absence, and I took charge of the Embassy. Shortly before their departure, when the first ice—a very thin crust of it—was quite broken between me and my excellent chief, he announced his intention of introducing me himself to the Chancellor, Prince Gortchacow, with whom I would of course have to transact business. “By the way,” he said, “do you know of any circumstance that could have told against your appointment here?” and went on to explain that being in England at the time I was gazetted, the Russian Ambassador, Brunnow, had expressed to him the opinion that the selection made of me was not altogether judicious. He had not advanced anything against me personally, but had remarked that Petersburg was an expensive post and might be beyond my means. Sir Andrew added that he thought the Ambassador must have had some special motive for making this observation. Although rather surprised at what my chief told me, I did not attach importance to it, and was taken to see the Chancellor. I had been prepared for his inordinate—really almost childish—vanity, by my old Carlsruhe and Baden friend, Talleyrand, who had now become Ambassador to the Russian Court,

and with whom I remained on very intimate terms. Talleyrand, who was not exactly a favourite of the Prince, maintained that no flattery could be too fulsome for him. “Tapez-lui sur son vieux nez,” he said in most undiplomatic language, “à grands coups d’encensoir ; il n’en aura jamais assez.”

When I was introduced to the celebrated statesman, he at once rather startled me by saying : “Qu'est-ce que vous êtes venu trouver ici ? — une ruine !” but, after this piece of mock humility, entered into conversation very cordially, and in questioning me as to my previous posts paid me the compliment of affecting to know something of my past career. Tall and slight, and betraying but few signs of the senility to which he had referred, with a searching glance that sought in vain to entrench itself behind gold-rimmed spectacles, and with all the carriage and manners of a long-past age, he made upon me at first sight a very favourable impression, and subsequently showed me such kindness that I have preserved the most pleasant recollections of him.

At this time two questions chiefly engaged his attention. The first was a new law on naturalisation just issued by the Turkish Government, that raised a number of difficult questions, about which, in accordance with our traditional but long since exploded policy of bolstering up the unspeakable Turk, we, together with the French, opposed the line taken by Prince Gortchacow. The other, far

more interesting, question was that of a “neutral zone”¹ to be established between Russia and ourselves in Central Asia. Some such arrangement had been discussed between the Chancellor and Lord Clarendon at Baden-Baden the summer before, and was, in fact, the origin of the understanding now in existence about Afghanistan. Those were the days of General Tchernaeff, whom the Emperor had just recalled for excess of zeal—“the Hernan Cortez of Central Asia,” as Schweinitz, the Prussian Military Attaché, dubbed him—and of other “unquiet spirits,” conveniently disavowed on occasion by the Imperial Government, but who were none the less laying the solid foundations of the Czar’s dominion in those regions. My interviews with the Chancellor were therefore both frequent and interesting. The second or third time I called upon him, with some despatch from Lord Clarendon, he suddenly, as I was taking leave, said: “Dites-moi ! qu’est-ce que c’est que ces dépêches que vous avez mises sur mon compte ?” I was much taken aback, but of course professed not to know what he could possibly be referring to. As, however, he recurred to the subject whenever we met, I one day *de guerre lasse* took the drafts of my compositions with me, and read out to him, across the writing-table that had witnessed the discussion of so many weighty questions, these audacious fabrications of mine. It was, I imagine, a unique experience. The Chancellor

¹ The expression “neutral zone” occurred, I believe for the first time, in one of my despatches of this period on the Central Asiatic question.

listened attentively, with now and then an approving nod, especially at the passages in which I had freely vented my feelings about our peace-at-any-price policy, and when I had done, said: "J'aurais signé cela des deux mains," adding much more on which I will not enlarge. The next day his *âme damnée*, Catacazy, told me at a party at Princesse Lise Troubetzkoi's, that *le chancelier* had said the most civil things about my *talent de rédaction*, and certainly from that time the old Prince took me into especial favour. I became, according to the *chers collègues*, his pet *Chargé d'Affaires*, and later on he even forgave me the "undisciplined" attitude, as he called it, which I permitted myself on the question of the abrogation of the Black Sea clauses.

Prince Gortchacow was the wittiest but, I am inclined to think, one of the most superficial of statesmen. I seldom came away from him, however, without some good saying which I did not fail to retail in my private letters to Lord Clarendon, who, by the way—but then, as a trained diplomatist, he had a strong feeling for the service which has been entirely wanting in some of his successors—kindly gave me more encouragement than any Foreign Secretary under whom I ever served. Unfortunately Prince Gortchacow's vanity laid him open to undesirable influences. The *petit ministère*, as his intimates of the Imperial Chancellerie were termed, partly owed their standing with him to unblushing adulation. A good

story was told of Catacazy—the cleverest and least reputable of them, whom he sent to Washington, but had to recall on account of his attempts to embroil us with the United States. This Russo-Greek (son of a former Envoy at Athens) had entangled himself with a lady of Jewish extraction, of the romantic appellation of Fitzjames de Berwick, whom he was foolish enough to marry, to his patron the Chancellor's great disgust. "Hence-forward," the Chancellor said to him, "you are lost for me in the crowd!"—"Of your Highness's admirers," was the ready reply. This the Prince could not resist. "You are a man of wit," he said to the wily Catacazy, "come and dine with me this evening." The Chancellor's greatest weakness was his passion for style, and he certainly was an admirable writer himself. Old Tutchew, a poet and wit of the day, happily described him as *le Narcisse de l'encrier*, but while mirroring himself in his own polished periods, he would forgive a good deal to an able *collaborateur*. Some of his staff, too, were writers of the highest order—Jomini (son of the great tactician) taking the first rank amongst them, and being in every way a credit to the Imperial Foreign Office. What opportunities I have had in later years of seeing the productions of that Chancellerie, lead me to think that the high literary standard it attained in the days of Jomini, Hamburger (afterwards my colleague at Berne), Gerebtsow, and others is not kept up in the same degree.

My brother's Lobanow connection was, as I have hinted, of great service to us. One of Nadine's sisters was married to the Brazilian Minister at St. Petersburg, Ribeiro da Sylva, and a very amiable couple they were. But our main resource, next to Countess Koucheleff, was my sister-in-law's niece, Spera, the wife of the Bavarian Minister, Baron Truchsess-Wetzhausen. At her house I first got to know Prince Alexis Lobanow, afterwards Ambassador in London and Vienna, and, for too short a time, Minister for Foreign Affairs, who, as a cousin of Nadine's, from the first treated me with great cordiality. Lobanow was one of the most charming of a nation of *enguirlandeurs*, for—when they lay themselves out to captivate—the best class of Russians are irresistible. At that time Adjoint, or Under Secretary in the Home Department, Prince Alexis was mostly engrossed by his researches regarding the reign of the Emperor Paul, and his erudition on what still remains one of the obscure periods of Russian history was surprising. He collected an immense mass of material on the subject, although he never, so far as I know, put it into shape for publication. One evening at the Truchsess's he gave us a most graphic account of the murder of Paul, even to making for us a rough plan of the Emperor's bedroom, with the position of the furniture, &c., which I unfortunately lost afterwards, with other papers, in one of my many removals. He told us that the Emperor, roused from his sleep

by steps on a small private staircase leading to his door, which had been left unguarded that night through treachery, and suspecting mischief, he got out of bed and concealed himself behind a screen at the other end of the room. The conspirators went straight to the bed, and, finding it empty, one of them—Zoubow, I think—said: “Le nid est chaud; l’oiseau n’est pas loin!” They soon dragged the ill-fated Paul from his hiding-place, and made him go to his writing-table to sign a paper they had brought with them by which he abdicated the throne. This, in his terror, he agreed to do, when Pahlen,¹ if I am not wrong, observed: “What is the good of this? To-morrow he might revoke it, and where should we be then?” Whereupon they seized and tried to strangle him, in approved Russian historic fashion,² but, bungling the attempt, and the Emperor struggling desperately for his life, one of them took up a heavy ornamental paper-weight—a present their wretched victim had received that very day—and finished him off with it.

Alexis Lobanow had been at infinite pains to

¹ It is related of Count Pahlen that the Lutheran *pasteur* who attended him in his last moments, and to whom he had made a sort of general confession, timidly ventured to refer to the Emperor Paul as possibly weighing somewhat on the dying Count’s conscience, receiving the impatient reply: “Mit dem habe ich schon längst abgerechnet” (I settled with him long ago).

² Peter III. was strangled at Ropscha in 1762 in the same way, and Ivan VI. probably met his death in a similar manner. The particulars of the murder of Peter III. are given in great detail at the end of the (mostly apocryphal) Memoirs of the Empress Catherine, in an edition now, I believe, suppressed, but which I saw a good many years ago.

consult every possible source or authority about Paul, and, among other things, had gone a long distance to visit an octogenarian Prince Lapoukhine, who was the only surviving member of the Emperor's household. Arriving at his house in the forenoon, after an endless journey, he found it shut up, and not a soul stirring. Having at last succeeded in rousing some one, he was told that the rule of the establishment was systematically to turn night into day. Accordingly, as evening approached, he was welcomed successively by the inmates, breakfasted with them at nightfall, and, after dinner, at something like 4 A.M., interviewed the old Prince, and got what information he could out of him. Lobanow, who was very cultivated and accomplished, like all his family—the well-known champion of Mary, Queen of Scots, was one of his cousins—originated a loan exhibition of Russian national portraits during my stay at Petersburg. The most curious portion of this interesting show was a series of portraits of the Emperor Paul from a child—and, by the way, a nice-looking child—onwards, in which it was quite possible to trace, beginning with the uniforms that marked the period of his worship for Frederick of Prussia, the progress of insanity in the unfortunate autocrat, not only in his countenance but in the increasing extravagance and grotesqueness of his garments, and more especially of the monstrous head-coverings he affected. Lobanow's life of Paul, should it ever come out, ought to be a

most interesting book, but bearing in mind certain facts touching on other Imperial portraits, and incidentally on curious problems in Russian history, doubts are permissible as to its publication. We went one day, with a special order from Delianow, the Minister of Public Instruction—whose wife, *née* Lazarew, was one of the most agreeable of Petersburg hostesses—over the magnificent Imperial Library. The Director, who kindly showed us its treasures himself, particularly called our attention to a splendid portrait of the Empress Catherine, by Lampi, that was hung in a place of honour it fully deserved, in one of the principal rooms. This picture he had discovered, he told us, in a lumber room, with its face turned to the wall, and with the greatest difficulty had obtained leave to rescue it thence and restore it to its proper dignity. The fact is that for two reigns, and more especially during that of Nicholas, Catherine was in complete disgrace, and although with the high-minded liberator—so soon to be foully murdered—a reaction set in, and a monument to the great Empress (erected since my time) now graces the city she did so much to render really Imperial, her extraordinary page in history has yet to be fairly and worthily written, and above all rescued from the compilers of more or less spurious memoirs who have made it their own and defaced it. As with the official tabooing of Catherine, so may it well be with Paul, for reasons into which I need not enter.

But I have said nothing as yet of my immediate colleagues of the Embassy. Dear old Victor Drummond,¹ who, with his charming wife, has shown me much hospitality of recent years in his snug Bavarian home, was our senior Second Secretary and head of the Chancery, and next to him came Frederick Antrobus, in those days the gayest of the gay, but long since detached from the vanities of diplomacy and of the world, and now benignantly ruling over the Oratory in London. Constantine Phipps² and his lovely wife, whom I have already mentioned, were soon transferred from Petersburg to Stuttgart and replaced by my great friend Edwin Egerton.³ Perhaps the most noteworthy member of our staff, in some ways, was Tom Michell—"Foma Ivanovitch"⁴—who was *à cheval* between the Consular and Diplomatic Services, being our Consul—and a most efficient one—at Petersburg, but likewise holding the local rank of Second Secretary to the Embassy, without which he would have been excluded from all Court ceremonies and entertainments. Michell's unrivalled knowledge of the language and people, and very great abilities and powers of work, marked

¹ Mr. V. A. W. Drummond, C.B., his Majesty's Minister at Munich.

² Mr. Phipps is now his Majesty's Minister at Brussels.

³ Sir Edwin Egerton, G.C.M.G., K.C.B., now his Majesty's Minister at Athens.

⁴ The Russian for "Thomas the son of John." Michell was, I believe, born at Cronstadt of English parents long settled in Russia, and like his brother and successor, John, who is still doing excellent work as Consul-General at Petersburg, was familiar with Russ from his birth.

him out for a far more successful career than fell to his lot, for, owing partly to Russian official apprehension of a man who was rendering us absolutely invaluable service, and partly to the indiscreet utterances of which he was occasionally guilty, Petersburg was practically made too hot for him, and any future he might have had in Russia was nipped in the bud. He afterwards held for a good many years the very honourable and pleasant post of Consul-General at Christiania, where he served under me, but his life had been thoroughly embittered, and the very capable and warm-hearted fellow and his excellent wife may both be said to have died of broken hearts, if, indeed, there be such a termination to earthly troubles.

We had, too, for a few months an Unpaid Attaché of the name of Warde, whose strange, untimely end preserves to him a place in my almost inconveniently crowded memory. He went one day, in very bitter weather, in his open sledge, to a fencing-class at the rooms of Lamansky, the Director of the National Bank. In an outer hall there was a parrot of which he was in the habit of taking notice. The bird was very tame, and Warde, leaving the *salle d'armes*, stopped to give it a lump of sugar which he held in his teeth. The parrot slightly nipped his lip, drawing blood. He put up his handkerchief to it and waited outside in the cold for his sledge to come up. Next day he went with all of us to a great ball at the Winter

Palace, where I noticed that he had a bit of sticking-plaster on his lip. The following day he sent word that he was unwell and could not come to the Chancery, and before the week was over died of most acute blood-poisoning, on his twenty-third birthday. He would then, under a special clause in his father's will, have come of age and into the enjoyment of some twelve or fifteen thousand a year. Parrot bites are said to be venomous, but the theory of the doctors who attended Warde was that the blood from the slight open wound had been decomposed by the intense cold, and that from it the poison had spread to the whole system. We buried the poor fellow at Strelna, I remember, with the thermometer marking fully twenty degrees below the freezing-point of Centigrade.

That terrible cold ! As I have said, the Russian methods of coping with it both indoors and out are so perfect that the newly-arrived stranger becomes almost heedless of the temperature. Nevertheless any one attending for the first time some great reception at Court cannot, I think, but realise to the full the grim aspect of the Russian winter. In the squares that adjoin the Winter Palace are iron pavilions, like great band-stands, where immense fires are kept up all night for the coachmen and sledge-drivers. In their long *caymans*, wadded some three inches thick, and their fur-caps and collars, they are really able to brave the cold with impunity, though one hears

now and then of some poor wretch, with an overdose of *vodky*, having been found frozen on his box. But once the Imperial threshold has been passed, it is the contrast with the cruelly bleak scene without that beggars all description. There is a defiance of climate and latitude about the smaller Court balls especially which is quite amazing. At these *fêtes*, known as the *bals des palmiers*, the supper-tables are each of them laid round the trunk of a large palm tree imbedded in a small parterre of the most exquisite flowers. The effect of the immense room, as one enters it, is that of a tropical grove in some gorgeous fairy scene, and in looking on it, one's thoughts cannot but turn for a moment to those one has just left to the rigours of the frozen world outside. As a matter of fact, however, even the most destitute in Russia suffer much less in winter than do our own thinly-clad poor in their ill-found dwellings. Ignorance and drink far more than Arctic surroundings are the evils the *moujik* has to contend with in his hard and joyless existence. To go back to these Court *fêtes*, nothing could exceed their luxury and magnificence, and, in my time, when the orchestra towards midnight struck up that most spirited of dances the mazurka—which at Petersburg takes the place of the *cotillon*—and Nicolas Nicolaïevitch, the image of his splendid father and of his beautiful sister of Würtemberg, and the most graceful of dancers (the dullest of men, it was said, and

feeblest of generals¹), went swinging down the room at the head of some sixty couples, the spell of all this gaiety and splendour seized upon one, as it were, and made one think that nothing could exceed the brilliancy of the scene, almost barbaric though it was in its display.

Of the Court ceremonies, the most interesting and original was the "blessing of the waters," which takes place in the forenoon on the Feast of the Epiphany in almost invariably severe weather. Places are reserved for the diplomatic corps at some of the countless windows of the Palace looking over the quay and the great snow-field that covers the frozen river beyond. To reach these windows, one has to traverse a series of immense apartments all lined by detachments of the many regiments of the Imperial Guard in full review order. This indoor parade is no less striking to the eye than to one's other senses, for these splendid troops bring with them a *triple extract de caserne* which, mingled with the scent of the *eau à brûler* so freely used in all Petersburg houses, produces in these over-heated rooms a decidedly trying atmosphere. What would one not often give in Russia in the winter-time for that unattainable thing—a breath of fresh air? At a given hour the Emperor and his suite, accompanied by all the Grand Dukes, and preceded by a crowd

¹ The third son of the Emperor Nicholas, who was at first Commander-in-Chief in the Russo-Turkish War of 1876.

of clergy in gorgeous vestments, passes in procession through the entire Palace down to a temporary chapel erected on the Neva, where a short service is held by the Metropolitan, who blesses, through a hole cut in the ice, the "waters of Jordan." As all the persons present at the ceremony have to remain bareheaded, the more prudent among them, beginning with his Imperial Majesty, provide themselves with more or less artistic wigs for the occasion. The whole function concludes with a sumptuous *déjeuner dînatoire*.

The cost of the Imperial entertainments must be prodigious, and no Civil List, however liberal, would suffice for a Court kept up on so lavish a scale. I heard a good deal about this from one of the Koucheleff connection, a Count Moussine Pouschkine, who had been Maréchal de la Cour for a short time. He said that that most conscientious of rulers, the Emperor Alexander II., was very anxious to reduce the expenditure and, above all, to check the waste, not unattended with peculation, which took place in all branches of the Imperial establishment. Taking his cue from his master, Pouschkine seriously applied himself to retrenchment. But he had counted without his superior, the Grand Maréchal, and had still less gauged the power of vested interests. After a stout struggle with these potent adversaries he resigned his office in despair. He told me what had been the immediate and very trivial cause of

his doing so. Under the Imperial Household regulations drawn up ages ago, any one summoned to Court from a distance, or bringing despatches, was entitled to a certain number of meals, according to the length of his stay, at each of which three bottles of wine—Madeira, claret, and hock—were opened for his consumption. Shocked by this waste, the zealous Pouschkine suggested to the Court purveyors that they should provide for these occasions pints instead of whole bottles. There was such an outcry over this proposal, which was represented as derogatory to the Imperial dignity, that it became the last drop in the bitter cup Pouschkine was draining, and made him give up in disgust. A good story too was current about the relations between the Grand Maréchal aforesaid and these Court purveyors, who were the famous *magasin anglais* founded in the reign of Catherine by Nicholls and Plincke—an immense establishment that supplied the wants of the Court, from the diamond snuff-boxes and decorations down to the liquor that filled the Imperial cellars. It was customary for the *magasin* to send its respectful congratulations to the Grand Maréchal on New Year's day by one of its chief employés. The New Year had passed already and no congratulations had yet reached his Excellency. He inquired whether possibly the message might not by some oversight have miscarried, and, on being assured that none had been received, gave orders that the *magasin*

should be reminded of its forgetfulness. Whereupon the *magasin*, with profound apologies, congratulated in due form (in reality for the second time) to the customary tune of ten thousand roubles. Who had intercepted the first congratulations my deponent sayeth not.

Before leaving these Court stories, I will mention an absurd incident that occurred at one of the first State balls I was at, even though the laugh may be against me in it. We *diplomates* were drawn up in due order for the *cercle* which precedes these *fêtes* and during which any necessary presentations are made. Our Embassy ranking by seniority¹ next to the French one, I was almost immediately behind Talleyrand. At the farther end of the room stood the American Envoy, General Clay, and by him a gentleman in plain dress-clothes — the only person so attired in all this assemblage of gala uniforms and decorations. “Qui peut-être ce monsieur en habit noir à côté de l’Américain ?” observed Talleyrand to me, “ça doit être un dentiste.” “Non,” I replied, “c’est mon beau-père.” “Ah ! mon cher,” said poor Talleyrand in tones of real anguish, “qu'est-ce que vous voulez que je vous dise ?” What indeed could he have said ? The story, which is not a bad one,

¹ It is perhaps superfluous to explain that precedence between Embassies and Legations at a given Court simply depends on the date of the presentation of the credentials of their respective heads ; Ambassadors and Envoys ranking as between themselves on that basis. This is one of the few sensible arrangements made at the Congress of Vienna.

might perhaps serve as a moral to those among our new and, I would fain hope, reliable American friends who have been cavilling so much at their countrymen over here for lowering their dignity as free citizens of the United States by putting on court-dress—that is, knee-breeches such as the great Washington must have worn all his life.

I ought to have mentioned before that the Harringtons had been on a visit to us since the beginning of the year. When they left us at the end of March it was arranged that my wife, who required a complete change after her confinement, should join them at Berne, before going on by the doctor's advice to that dullest of German watering-places, Schwalbach, which certainly does wonders for delicate constitutions such as hers. My Chargéship, of course, tied me down to my post, so that, leading a bachelor life for the first time since my arrival in Russia, I now saw more of the society of the place than I had done before. The highest class of Russians are such perfect hosts, and the ladies especially are so intelligent and such cultivated cosmopolitans, that social life at Petersburg appeared to me most attractive. One of the few drawbacks to it was the early hour and hurried character of the dinner-parties, and the interminable interval between them and the other events of the evening, which all began very late. It was a bore to sit down at six o'clock to an exquisite and admirably served dinner which

one was not given time to eat in comfort (one literally had to hold on to one's plate to prevent its being snatched away by the too attentive servants), and then to be left to one's own devices for several hours; for these hasty—to me almost Barmecide—feasts broke up quite early. Many of the ladies simply went home to bed, not reappearing until after midnight at some ball or party, where they would sup and then stay on till any hour in the morning. The men of course had the resource of the Yacht Club, with high play—for those who cared for, and could, or could not, afford it—at *ieralasch*, a Russian form of whist which I take to be the parent of the now so popular game of bridge. Then, too, there were the beautiful ballets at the Opera House, and the French company of the Théâtre Michel, which was quite a *succursale* of the Paris Gymnase. Still I found the great length of the evenings and the terribly late hours decidedly trying.

Almost opposite to us in the Sergievskaya lived Princesse Lise Troubetzkoi, whom I had seen a good deal of in my Baden days. Clever, mincing, somewhat *mordante* "Lison"—to give her the name by which she was best known—was quite an institution in Petersburg society. She was extremely civil to us, and frequent invitations reached our humble *isba*¹ from her big house over the way.

¹ *Isba*, the typical Russian wooden house.

Political gossip is the staple food of the diplomatist at Petersburg even more than elsewhere, and at Princesse "Lison's," the future Egeria of Monsieur Thiers and the would-be *confidente* of the "Chancellor," one got plenty of it. There was also, close to the Palais Anitchkow on the Nevski, the beautiful house of Princesse Lise's mother, Princesse Hélène Kotchoubey, an exceedingly clever woman and a very great lady indeed, with a most pleasing unmarried daughter, like the nicest of English girls in all her ways, who shortly afterwards married General Dournovo; and a handsome Bielosselsky daughter-in-law, *née* Skobelew,¹ who had a lovely contralto voice. Of the ladies I saw much of, the most attractive to my mind were the very charming owner of our Embassy House, Princesse Soltikow, *née* Dolgorouky, and her quite beautiful sister, Princesse Mary Dolgorouky, who had married a distant cousin of another branch of the same house. I never saw a handsomer family than the Dolgoroukys I speak of. Two of the brothers—Niki (Nicholas), who was very fair and was afterwards Minister at Teheran, and Sandy (Alexander), very dark, and now one of the *grandes charges de cour*—were quite remarkable for their good looks. A third sister, Comtesse Steenbock Fermor, is the mother of Comtesse Kapnist, one of the nicest of our colleagues in after years at the Hague and Vienna. There was another, entirely different,

¹ Daughter of the renowned general of that name.

Dolgorouky house I often went to, the owner of which, Michel—the husband of the lady I had known at Naples—had two strikingly pretty sisters, one of whom (Catherine) afterwards became the Emperor Alexander's morganatic wife. I have not yet spoken of the best friend I had at Petersburg, and with whom I remained in correspondence a good many years—Princesse Irène Paskevitch—but of her and of her home on the Quai Anglais I shall have more to say later on.

Early in July my wife returned from Schwalbach, greatly benefited by the *cure* and quite her bright self again. At this time, too, our house acquired an invaluable inmate in Catherine Harwood, who came as head nurse to my eldest boy, and for upwards of thirty years was a most faithful servant and friend in my family. The brief Russian summer passed away quickly. We went a great deal to Ligovo and other places in that neighbourhood, which is studded with country houses. We also made a short excursion with the Truchsesses to Finland, staying for a couple of nights at Viborg and at the fine falls at Imatra. Towards the end of September my wife's health unfortunately again gave way, and I reluctantly decided to take her south for the winter, and break up, to my great sorrow, our happy little home in the Sergievskaya. It was hard to have to take up one's staff and go forth wandering once more.

CHAPTER XXIII

LIFE IN RUSSIA, 1870-1871

FROM Petersburg, which we left on the 13th of October, we first made our way by Berlin and Frankfort to Baden-Baden on a ten days' visit to my sister at the Villa Delmar. It was much too early yet to go down to Nice, where I had secured apartments for the winter, and as the Harringtons were away on leave in America, we determined to stop at the Hôtel Beau Rivage at Ouchy, on the Lake of Geneva, which can be commended to the traveller on his way south as one of the best of halting-places. We were so comfortable here that we lingered on till well into December. From this time dates my better acquaintance with Wilfrid Blunt, who then belonged to the Legation at Berne, from which he soon after retired. He had lately married and had taken up his quarters on the lake, close to Ouchy, for the autumn months. I had first met him three years before at this same spot with a lovely and most devoted sister, whom he lost all too soon. He was then staying at the ancient "Ancre" inn close by, in the rooms where Byron—whose granddaughter, Lady Anne King-Noel, Blunt was afterwards to marry—is supposed to have written the "Prisoner

of Chillon." There was thus in every way a fitness about the habitation chosen by Wilfrid, himself a very charming poet. The Blunt *ménage*, of course, were a real resource for us. Almost since the days when Gibbon put the final words to his monumental work, in that summer-arbour in the garden of what is now an inn bearing his name, Lausanne and its neighbourhood have been the centre of an Anglo-Swiss colony very superior to the common run of British communities in foreign parts. At Belle Rive lived the sociable Bairds, and, in villas scattered over the slopes around, were various members of the De Cerjat family, whom we saw a good deal of. Some of these very pleasant people have been driven away since by the vexatious fiscal arrangements of the short-sighted cantonal authorities, which make this lovely country distasteful to even the most long-suffering of British residents.¹

At Beau Rivage itself a number of agreeable people were staying, one of whom, the distinguished French painter, Eugène Lami, was much struck by my little wife's appearance, and made a very pretty sketch of her, which he afterwards kindly sent me. Here too I renewed acquaintance with the Blomes, who had formed part of the last Hanoverian Legation in London, where Baroness Blome, whom I had first met at the Apponyis, made some sensation by

¹ The local taxation of foreign residents in some of the Swiss cantons is a long-standing and very just grievance.

her beauty. There was, too, the artistic Cortina, Spanish Minister at Berne, who left us all no peace till we agreed to take part in some *tableaux vivants* arranged by him, and followed by an absurd Palais Royal farce (*Les Méli-Mélo de la Rue Meslay*), which went off capitally to our own complete satisfaction, and, it is to be hoped, to that of our audience. We were quite sorry to leave cheery Beau Rivage for Nice, just in time for Christmas. We found here my brother and his wife, as also the Talleyrands, who, like ourselves, had fled from the Russian winter. The two months that now speedily passed away in the usual round of sociability of the Nice winter season deserve no chronicling. I little thought, at this happy, *insouciant* time, how sadly different would be the conditions of my next visit to these old haunts of mine. My leave of absence was now drawing to an end, and we had to frame our plans accordingly. We finally settled to travel together as far as Vienna, whence my wife with the child was to go on a long visit to her elder sister, Mary, who had married at Berne a Secretary of the Italian Legation, Count Joannini, an old Athens colleague, who was now acting as diplomatic agent for Italy at Belgrade. We parted at Vienna early in March, and I returned alone to Petersburg, spending two days on the way thither with our Consul-General, Mansfield,¹ at Warsaw. On my

¹ Colonel Sir Charles Mansfield, K.C.M.G., afterwards Minister Resident at Lima, whence he retired on a pension.

arrival the Buchanans kindly offered me rooms at the Embassy, where I was kept indoors for a fortnight, I remember, by that ridiculous complaint, the mumps, the result of a chill caused by plunging into the northern winter again.

Important changes had taken place in the diplomatic corps at St. Petersburg while I was away on leave in the early part of the year 1870. My friend Talleyrand had resigned and left the service, and had been succeeded by General Fleury, whose appointment, viewed by the light of subsequent events, was a portent of the coming tempest of this fatal year. During my four months Chargéship the year before, I had duly reported the rival efforts made by the French and Prussian Governments to acquire ascendancy at the Russian Court, and had expressed my belief that France was not gaining ground in this race for the Imperial favour. I had, besides, drawn attention to information which clearly pointed to warlike designs on the part of the French Emperor, that sovereign being in despair at the turn taken by the elections in the summer, and notably at Paris. The Emperor, it was reported from an absolutely unimpeachable source, "spoke with tears in his eyes of the ingratitude of the Parisians, whom he had pampered, and who in return execrated him." His position had evidently become so difficult, that there was a great risk of his seeking to retrieve it by an appeal to the old national craze for glory and conquest. In a private letter to Lord Clarendon,

written in April (1869), I reported, on the authority of the Private Chancellerie of King Leopold, that at Brussels it was believed that the Emperor, "being resolved upon war with Prussia, wanted Belgium as a *point d'appui stratégique*, and was only stopped by warnings from Prince Napoleon Jérôme that Italy could not be reckoned upon, and by a certain hesitation on the part of Austria." In May of the same year I had further been able to send Lord Clarendon an abstract of a confidential report of Count (as he then was) Bismarck, in which the chances of war with France were spoken of quite openly. The Prussian Government and people, said Count Bismarck, were far from wishing for war, but they did not fear it, and were fully prepared for it. France was taking an undue interest in the creation of a South German Confederation, to the formation of which it wrongly accused Prussia of offering obstacles,¹ and Count Bismarck observed that no foreign interference in German affairs would be permitted. He also—and this was eminently characteristic of him—referred to the position of Belgium in the case of a conflict. Prussia, he said, "would meet France on the Rhine with a million

¹ By Article IV. of the Treaty of Prague, Austria acknowledged the dissolution of the old Germanic Bund, and the formation of a North German Confederation. With respect to the States to the south of the Main, she signified her agreement to their forming a union, the national link (*Verbindung*) of which with the North German Confederation was reserved for future settlement, *and which should have an independent international existence.*

Check

Germans," but "she might not make the same efforts in a Belgian complication, and there were certain combinations that might suit her better than offering opposition in that quarter." With such information as this before our Foreign Office—supplemented, no doubt, by still more valuable reports from other quarters—the statement made by Lord Granville in the House of Lords, after the lamented death of Lord Clarendon at the very eve of the war, that the aspect of European affairs was so unusually peaceful, has always seemed to me surprising.

General Fleury, Master of the Horse to his sovereign, and his most confidential servant, had been specially charged to do all he could to ingratiate himself with the Emperor Alexander and Russian society. His Embassy was placed on a footing of unusual splendour, his servants wore the Imperial liveries, and the *garde-meuble* had been laid under contribution for costly furniture and gobelins to decorate his house. Prince Gortchacow used to say that corrupt bargains had frequently been proposed to him from the Tuilleries, and it is not impossible that Fleury may also have been charged with some seductive offer. The tide, however, had long set against France at the Winter Palace, nor could Fleury hope to compete successfully with men like Prince Reuss, the Minister for Prussia, or the Military Attaché, General Schweinitz, who succeeded him later on as Ambassador. Prince

Reuss (Henry VII.¹ or "Septi," as his friends affectionately called him) was one of the most charming men I ever met. I had first made his acquaintance at the Metternichs in Paris, and he was kindness itself to me at Petersburg, now and then imparting to me the very class of information which is most useful to the aspiring Chargé d'Affaires. I owe him, in fact, a good deal in this respect. Reuss stood in high favour with the Emperor Alexander, and, belonging to one of the German reigning families, was treated by him with marked distinction. He was, besides, the Emperor's habitual *camarade de chasse*, and thus had opportunities of seeing his Majesty on a footing of intimacy denied to the rest of his colleagues. The same in a less degree could be said of Schweinitz, who, being specially attached to the Emperor's person as Military Plenipotentiary, was constantly in attendance upon him. Fleury's mission, notwithstanding its *mise en scène*, was fatally destined to be the last diplomatic *fiasco* of the moribund Empire.

I saw a good deal of Prince Reuss, and was frequently his guest at the Prussian Legation. I remember meeting there one day the Grand Ecuyer, Baron de Meyendorff, an old general, then not far from eighty, who, after some coaxing, was persuaded to tell us something of his experiences during the terrible campaign of 1812, which he had gone through,

¹ All the princes of the House of Reuss have been named Henry ever since the eleventh century, the numbering not running higher than a hundred and then beginning again with one.

when quite a young fellow, as *galopin* (orderly officer) on the staff of one of the Russian commanders. In depicting to us the horrors of the French retreat, he told us that he had once been sent late in the afternoon with pressing orders for some troops in the direction of Smolensk. In the fading daylight he would certainly have lost his way on the boundless and featureless frozen plain, but for a track which the pursuing Russians had marked by planting upright in the snow-drifts the corpses of the enemy that had fallen by the way. For a considerable distance, in fact, he had ridden literally through an avenue of frozen Frenchmen.

During my absence a change had likewise taken place at the American Legation, where General Cassius Clay had been succeeded by "Governor" Curtin. Talleyrand had a good story about the, in many ways, eccentric Clay. He had been to see and condole with him on the occasion of the murder of President Lincoln. "Well, Mr. Ambassador," said Clay, after listening to his expressions of regret, "although my name is Cassius, I am no partisan of political assassination." Of Curtin, with whom my wife and I were on very friendly terms, I shall have more to say further on.

At the Austrian Legation I no longer found M. Vetsera,¹ who had acted for some months as Chargé d'Affaires *en pied*. They had had the good

¹ It was a daughter of this gentleman who was later on mixed up in the most terrible drama of our times in Austria.

sense, at the *Ballplatz*¹ at Vienna, to put an end to a diplomatic *bouderie* which had lasted for some time between the two Cabinets, and had sent Count Bohuslav Chotek to Petersburg with the full rank of Envoy. I had known Chotek at Paris and at the Austrian Embassy in London, and a very good fellow he was, with a charming wife, a Countess Kinsky. The Choteks kept an exceedingly pleasant house, and soon achieved great popularity. My most vivid recollection of him at this distance of time happens, however, to be of an absurd character. Reuss had brought back with him, from one of the Imperial bear-hunts, the cub of a she-bear he had shot, and had made a present of it to his Austrian colleague. At dinner at the Choteks one evening, the ladies asked to see the little beast, and on its being brought in at dessert, Chotek gravely tucked his napkin into his shirt front, after the fashion of French *commis voyageurs*, and taking the baby-bear on his lap, proceeded to administer nourishment to it from a feeding-bottle, to the general amusement. The kind Choteks had a full nursery, and, among its small inmates, whom I well remember seeing, there was a little lady, then I suppose about two years old, who was afterwards to be called to a very exalted position indeed.²

¹ The Imperial Chancellerie at Vienna has been seated from time immemorial on this *place*, which takes its name from the old tennis-court that formerly stood here.

² Countess Sophie Chotek, now Princess Hohenberg, and morganatic wife of the Archduke Francis Ferdinand of Austria.

By this time I had become an *habitué* of *Dom*¹ Paskevitch. I have before mentioned its mistress, Princesse Irène, *née* Worontzow-Daschkow, whose maternal grandmother, Madame Narischkine, had been a second mother to my sister-in-law Nadine. Princesse Paskevitch had inherited, without the very great beauty of her mother, Comtesse Worontzow, more than her charm and grace, and was the object of something not far removed from worship on the part of the few who were admitted to the privilege of her intimacy. For various reasons the Paskevitches mixed little with the rest of Petersburg society, and led comparatively secluded lives in their splendid and luxurious home. Their house was, however, open every night to a chosen set of relations and friends. Princesse Irène's brother, then the dashing colonel of the Tsarskoe Selo Hussars; Guedeonow, the witty Intendant of the Imperial Theatres; Gerebtsow and Vsevolovsky, both able collaborators of the Chancelier—and the latter the cleverest of caricaturists—were constant visitors at *Dom* Paskevitch. Although Princess Irène's was far from being a political *salon*, one learnt a good deal there about current events, and heard them discussed with great freedom, and just a tinge of *fronde*. With the exception of Reuss and Louis d'Arenberg,² the Austrian Military

¹ Literally house, but applied to family mansions like *hôtel* in France or *palais* in Austria.

² Prince Louis d'Arenberg, a major in the Austrian Cavalry, was a younger brother of the Prince Auguste so well known in French political life, and President of the Suez Canal Company.

Attaché, there were few *diplomates* in the small coterie that gathered round Princesse Irène's tea-table in the long gallery decorated with a splendid collection of armour by the late Field-Marshal, the conqueror of Erivan and pacificator of Warsaw. The whole house was full of the most beautiful things, and, as a specimen of them, I may mention a large mother-of-pearl and parcel-gilt ewer, the authentic work of Benvenuto Cellini. For this masterpiece, which was allowed to stand like any ordinary object on a window-sill, its owner was yearly besieged by the London art-dealers with fabulous offers. Prince Paskevitch, who was the most courteous but at the same time one of the most reserved and independent of men, had succeeded to the immense estates of his father in the old Polish provinces—part of property that had been confiscated after the great insurrection of 1831—and lived most of the year on his domain of Homel, in the Government of Mohilew. There he had witnessed the barbarous proceedings of Mouraview, when stamping out the last vestiges of the rising of 1863, and, as one of the greatest of Lithuanian landowners, had signed an address of remonstrance to the Emperor on the subject. On his return to Petersburg the Emperor sent for him, and reproached him for taking part in this step. High words, it was said, passed at his interview with the sovereign, whose playfellow and intimate he had been from his youth upwards, and who had

made him, at an unusually early age, an aide-de-camp général—the most coveted of distinctions in Russia—besides decorating him with the highest orders. All these dignities and honours Paskevitch at once resigned, and at the time of which I write he had never been near the Palace again. An attempt at reconciliation was made, some years later, at the inauguration by the Emperor of a monument to Field-Marshal Paskevitch at Warsaw. His son attended the ceremony, but left immediately afterwards, without, I believe, any *rapprochement* taking place between him and the Imperial friend of his youth.

Much the most important apartment at *Dom* Paskevitch was its *salle de spectacle*. Like her cousin, Nadine Lobanow, Princesse Irène was devoted to acting, and, next to her, was as perfect an amateur actress as I ever saw. In April she began busying herself with a performance which, as it chanced, was disastrously bound up with one of the most tragic occurrences in my recollection. One of the plays selected by the dear little Princess was *La Féé*, by Octave Feuillet (one of his *Scènes et Comédies*), in which she assigned to me the principal part, a very difficult one. Fortunately for me, Dupuis—the brilliant *jeune premier* of the Gymnase, at this time engaged at the Théâtre Michel—superintended our rehearsals. He kindly put heart into me, and undertook to coach me privately, a welcome offer which gave me a most interesting insight into the

technical part of acting, of which amateurs, as a rule, know so little.

The date fixed for our performance was, I think, the 8th. of May. I had arranged to leave directly after it with d'Arenberg, whom I had got to like very much, and our own excellent Military Attaché, Colonel Robert Blane, of the 2nd Life Guards, on a journey down the Volga to Tzaritzine. There I was to part with my companions, and go on alone to the Crimea, thence travelling up the Danube to join my wife at Belgrade, while they proceeded to the Caucasus. Our departure from Petersburg had, in fact, been put off on account of my share in the Paskevitch theatricals. By dint of diligent study we soon reached the date of the dress rehearsal (the 6th of May), and I only too well recollect Paskevitch giving up a bear-shoot he had arranged for d'Arenberg that very day, on his wife's remonstrating against his taking away a friend to whose presence at the rehearsal she much held. To my great relief our *répétition générale* went off very well. When my part in it was over, I joined the spectators to watch the performance of my fellow-actors in the second piece, and d'Arenberg then came up to me and inquired on what day it would suit me to start on our journey. I answered him rather hurriedly, being intent on following the play, and he soon slipped away unperceived, without even, as was afterwards remembered, taking leave of his hosts.

Early next morning my servant came in with the dreadful news that d'Arenberg had just been found strangled in his bed. I dressed and hastened to his apartment, in the Millionaia close by, where, as the police had not yet come to inquire into the circumstances of the crime, the poor fellow remained as he had been discovered, gagged and bound hand and foot with the sleeves of the night-shirt that had been torn off him, and the bell-rope he had himself pulled down in ringing in vain for help. Within a few hours his murderers were arrested, trying to sell a watch engraved with his coat of arms, and they at once made a full confession. One of them had been in d'Arenberg's service as *kuchni moujik*, or scullion, and knew something of his bachelor ways and a careless habit he had of carrying a good deal of money about him in notes in his pocket-book. A short time before he had handed me 600 roubles in this way for a pair of horses I had sold him. The *moujik* and his accomplice contrived to slip into the apartment (on the ground floor) early in the evening. They had brought food and *vodky* with them, and, after vainly endeavouring to break open a strong-box in which d'Arenberg kept his valuables, they ate and drank and waited for his return. On hearing him let himself in with his latch-key about 2 A.M., they concealed themselves behind some heavy curtains a couple of yards from his bed. They cynically described his humming to himself while he undressed, and taking up a

newspaper which he dropped on the ground (where I saw it lying) as he dozed off after putting out the light. As soon as they heard, by his heavy breathing, that he was asleep, they crept out and made for the bedside table where he had placed his watch and chain and the coveted pocket-book. They upset the table in the dark, and he woke up with a military "*Wer da?*" A horrible struggle must have ensued in the dark, for they used such violence as to break the Adam's apple in throttling him. He was quite alone in the lodgings, having given his valet leave to stay out that night, but the windows of his sitting-room exactly faced the Preobrajenski¹ guard-house at the Palace of the Hermitage, and it was dreadful to think of his being killed in this shocking manner within call, as it were, of the sentry over the way. It is impossible to convey an idea of the sensation caused by the event. Personally I was haunted by the reflection that, but for the alteration in the date for our journey, caused by the wretched theatricals, this tragedy might never have occurred. The Emperor was in despair at the murder of a distinguished foreign officer attached to his person, and besides attending the funeral himself with all the Grand Dukes, at first gave orders to have the assassins tried by drumhead court-martial and shot. He was dissuaded from this, however, and capital

¹ One of the oldest and most historical regiments of the Imperial Guard.

punishment having been suppressed in Russia for ordinary crimes, the villains were sentenced to hard labour in the Siberian mines, which is equivalent to death in a very short period. One curious circumstance was ascertained about d'Arenberg's last hours. He had left the Paskevitch house for the club, and, finding no play going on there, had sat talking for some time with strange interest of the terrible fate of Herbert, Vyner, and the others killed by Greek brigands just a fortnight before. The murder of Louis d'Arenberg is the most sinister of my recollections.

I left Petersburg with Blane on the 21st May for Warsaw and Vienna, giving up our originally proposed journey. We arrived at Vienna, in beautiful weather, in time for the principal day of the great race week, and, at a party at Princesse Croy's (*née Nugent*) in the evening, I remember meeting, for the first time, the extremely pretty wife of my old Brighton friend, Paul Metternich, whom I was to see a great deal of in later years at Vienna and Königswart. From Vienna we went down the Danube to Pesth and Semlin, and early on the 1st of July reached Belgrade, where I had the satisfaction of finding my wife in greatly improved health, and very happy in the care of her sister and Joannini. In many ways Joannini, who afterwards came to a sad end when Minister at Mexico, was more than ordinarily gifted. He had read a great deal on most subjects and with

much profit, was an excellent linguist, and, for an Italian, a remarkably profound musician and a very clever pianist. With more ballast and *esprit de conduite* he might have had a very distinguished career. During the ten days I passed under his roof at Belgrade, I acquired through him a certain knowledge of Balkanic affairs which was of great use to me in after years, and here too I first became acquainted with the Austro-Hungarian agent, Benjamin von Kállay, to-day probably the ablest statesman and administrator of the Dual Monarchy, and the greatest authority in the domain of Eastern politics.

From Belgrade Blane and I went on to Bucharest, where we stayed a couple of days, and were greatly struck, at a great fair we visited outside the town, by the manifest unpopularity of the then Prince of Roumania, to whom not a hat was doffed by the crowds that thronged the broiling, dusty roads. There was no outward promise at that time of the great position that very sagacious ruler has since made for himself. We continued our journey down the Danube, and after a night of torment from mosquitoes, the like of which for size and ferocity I have never seen elsewhere, transhipped at Galatz into the Russian steamer for Odessa, going on thence on the 16th of June to Sebastopol. I could not have had a more perfect travelling companion in the Crimea than Blane, who had been Military Secretary to his brother-in-law, Sir

William Codrington, at the close of the war, and of course knew every inch of the ground. With him as cicerone—familiar though I was with Kinglake's glowing pages—the more memorable scenes of the campaign were, of course, brought home to me as they never had been before. We drove to the narrow valley, confined by grassy slopes on either side, and shaped like a race-course, up which the six hundred had made their reckless charge, and visited the grim remains of the Redan and Malakoff. What struck me most was the landlocked harbour of Balaclava—its rocks still bearing in big letters the names of some of our ships that had lain there—now quite silent and deserted, a perfect haven of peace, a couple of sea-eagles, I remember, slowly circling in the intensely blue sky above it. From Sebastopol we posted through the gate of Baidar, along a road which almost rivals in beauty the Corniche of my early days, as far as the Worontzow domain at Alupka, where we were hospitably entertained, and tasted the famous wines produced on the estate from vines transplanted from the most renowned European vineyards.¹

We went on the next day to the Club Hotel at Yalta, and drove up in the afternoon to call at Massandra, another Worontzow estate then managed

¹ These wines, grown from the grapes of the Château Lafitte Steinberg and other *grands crus*, and treated according to the most approved methods of those places, are each in their way excellent, but all have a certain twang, or *goût du terroir*, of their own.

by one of the Troubetzkois. His wife, a very pleasant woman, took us for a drive over the pretty broken ground of the park, where, going down a steep incline, we met with a nasty accident. The pole-strap broke, and, the horses bolting, we were all three pitched out at the foot of the hill. The princess and I fell on soft ground and got off with a few scratches, but Blane was thrown with great force against the trunk of a tree, and, as was afterwards found, broke two ribs, no slight mishap to a man then turned sixty. With great pluck he picked himself up and walked back to the house, but was in such severe pain afterwards—the ignorant doctor who attended him not having the sense to put a tight bandage on him—that we were kept ten days at Yalta, and determined to return *via* Odessa to Petersburg as soon as possible. While Blane was laid up and we were waiting for the steamer, I rode from Yalta with Captain Harford,¹ then Vice-Consul at Sebastopol, to the ancient town of Baktchi Serai, a place but seldom visited. We roughed it for the night in the picturesque remains of the once very splendid and interesting palace of the Khans of Crim Tartary, and, on our return next day, halted at the lovely Tartar village of Kokos—likewise Worontzow property—embowered in verdure, and with a miniature

¹ Captain Harford, an old Crimean officer, to whose efforts the upkeep of our Crimean graves is primarily due, is now his Majesty's Consul at Manila.

mosque and minaret, pretty, very slightly veiled Tartar maidens, and a clear, brawling stream, where we had a delicious bathe after our long, scorching ride—a perfect bit of Arcady in the heart of these parched Crimean wastes.

At Odessa a clever French surgeon patched up poor Blane sufficiently to enable him to continue the journey, and on the 9th of July we were on our way to Kiew. The sight of the boundless ocean of wheat, just ripening for the sickle, which we skirted all through the hot, breathless night, remains with me as a vision of wealth untold and unrealised, so inadequate were the means existing in those days for conveying these gigantic stores of grain to any profitable market. A very large portion of the golden harvest was probably doomed to perish for want of roads and transport. We called at Kiew on the Governor-General Dondoukow Korsakow, who welcomed us most kindly and made us free of his table during the whole of our stay. We had seen nothing but Russian newspapers for more than a week, and I was very glad when the Governor-General handed me the last numbers of the *Journal de St. Pétersbourg*, observing at the same time that they contained nothing of interest. The first item of news I came upon was the Hohenzollern candidature for the vacant throne of Spain, and I remember at once telling the incredulous Dondoukow how grave seemed to me the possible consequences of this move on the part of the Prussian Government.

Knowing what I did of the political undercurrents, a conflict between France and Prussia was, I thought, now inevitable.

Holy Kiew, "the Jerusalem of Russia," has left me but indistinct recollections, of which the celebrated, but distressingly gruesome, catacombs of St. Anthony, and the grand view from the cliff overhanging the Dnieper across the limitless plains that stretch away into the very heart of Muscovy, alone survive. Even of Moscow, where we stopped three nights, I have preserved little beyond a general impression of the semi-barbaric splendour of the Kremlin and the uncouth, *baroque* magnificence of Vassili Blajennoi, the fact being that I was impatient to get home to Petersburg, where my family were shortly due from Belgrade, and was also very anxious to be back at my post at this, I felt certain, decisive crisis in European affairs. What I do remember, however, is meeting—coming out of the Hôtel Dussaux, where we were staying—a Prince Lobanow (a cousin of Nadine's), who told me he had that morning (the 17th of July, I think) arrived from his habitual headquarters at Baden-Baden, the French, when he left, being hourly expected to cross the Rhine.

Before going on leave I had taken one of the Koucheleff *dachas*¹ at Ligovo for the summer, and thither we went on my wife's return, the third week in July. Scattered about in this neighbourhood

¹ Small country house or villa.

were the summer retreats of several of the British colony. At Ligovo itself was a pleasant couple of the name of Gibson, belonging to the important house of Hubbard, and at Strelna the very hospitable Bairds. George Baird had succeeded not long before to some ironworks, which were the oldest and most considerable at Petersburg. He once told me that he had found, among the confidential papers of the firm, a very large contract with the Imperial Government for the supply of bars or wedges of iron to prop up the walls of the Isaac Cathedral, the huge foundations of which periodically showed signs of subsidence. One of the conditions of the contract was that it should be kept strictly secret, so sensitive are, or were, the Russian authorities to anything becoming known at all disparaging to the Ingrian swamp daringly chosen by Peter for his capital, or, as he termed it, his "window upon Europe." The fact is that, were it not for the untold millions sunk in its primitive morass, Petersburg would probably have been given up long ago as the seat of empire. "Floating like a bark overladen with precious goods" on the waste of waters around, its doom might even now be accomplished by an inroad from the waves of the Gulf, such as very heavy gales from the south-west bring about, and the approach of which is always notified by alarm guns from the fortress.¹

¹ It is said that a possible combination of exceptionally high tides and of a south-westerly hurricane might produce such a catastrophe.

The factory at Petersburg is in some sense a unique body among British trading communities, and has highly interesting associations. The house of Thomson and Bonar, for instance, is of such old standing that its books go back to a period not so very far remote from the days when Richard Chancellor, landing on his voyage of discovery at the mouth of the Dwina, first obtained leave to trade from Ivan the Terrible. Indeed the story of our Russia merchants and their earlier settlements at Archangel and Moscow would be most interesting, and well deserves to be written by some competent authority. Our greatest friends in the community were the Archibald Balfours, of Thomson and Bonar's, who afterwards showed me unbounded kindness at a time of great trouble. The short summer passed away pleasantly enough, varied by excursions to Peterhof, Ropscha—that dreary site of the murder of Peter III.—and Tsarskoe Selo. It was at the races at the latter place, on the 18th of August, that we first heard of the great battles fought round Metz and the sanguinary reverses of the French, and I well recollect the consternation caused by the news, the feeling in Russian society being strongly on the French side. My acquaintance with M. de Montebello, who had just joined the French Embassy, which he has since occupied as Ambassador for many years, dates from that inauspicious day.

Early in September the cold and damp drove us

into town to our old quarters at the Embassy, where, on the 22nd of October, was born my second son, William Edwin, named after his godfather, my very old friend, Edwin Egerton, then serving with me at the Embassy. In the course of this autumn and winter we saw much of the American Minister, "Governor" Curtin, so called from his having administered the great State of Pennsylvania all through the Civil War. Curtin was very friendly to England, and did us essential service in exposing the intrigues by which the Russian Minister at Washington, Catacazy, endeavoured to frustrate our then pending negotiations with the United States Government for the settlement of the Alabama and other claims. My chief recollection, however, of the American diplomatist is in connection with a very different subject. There was just then in Petersburg society a craze for table-turning, spirit-rapping, &c. My little wife also amused herself trying her hand at *planchette*, and certainly the results she obtained quite puzzled me, knowing how incapable she was of deceit in the matter. One evening at the Curtins she was thus engaged, when Curtin, habitually the blandest of men, almost sternly requested her to desist from this amusement, which touched, he told her, upon questions much too serious to be trifled with. His earnestness so impressed me that I begged him to explain his objections to me, whereupon he related what follows.

At the very eve of the great war, he was hard at work one day in the Government Offices at Philadelphia, when he was told that a person wished to speak to him on important business. Although very busy, he consented to see the applicant for a few minutes. The man ushered in was unknown to him and apparently in poor circumstances, while he evidently hailed from some Western State. "Mr. Curtin," he said, "I have a very urgent message for you which I must put in writing." He forthwith sat down and began to scribble, Curtin watching him with feelings that turned to utter amazement when he recognised, in what flowed from the pen of this entire stranger, the unmistakable handwriting of the mother he had lost not long before, and to whom he was devotedly attached. The message was not lengthy, but of so extraordinary a character that, when the writer had finished, Curtin asked what he could do for him, offering him money, or at any rate a free pass on the railway to take him to his distant home. The man thanked him, but declined any assistance, and repeated that he had simply been impelled to deliver the message in this form, Curtin remaining under the impression that he did not understand its import, and was acting mechanically under some mysterious influence. What he had thus written was a rough forecast of the chief events of the great contest which then had not yet broken out. Curtin was so struck by the circumstances, that he imparted them in con-

fidence, at the time, to friends at Philadelphia who, with him, afterwards watched with intense interest the developments predicted in the message. The result of this incident, however, was that, whenever he was in any doubt or difficulty, he resorted to the means so strangely indicated, and always received replies which he felt absolutely certain were in his mother's handwriting. That Mr. Curtin told me this singular story in perfect good faith I cannot for a moment doubt.

The skating this winter of 1870-71 was more enjoyable than usual, the club rink being at a sheltered spot in the Vassili Ostroff, instead of on the Neva near the Nicholas Bridge, where the icy draught was intolerable. And this reminds me of the only English visitors we had, this winter, in Lord and Lady Milton, who came the whole way from Odessa with their small children in severely cold weather. All I knew of Lord Milton was his having published an interesting book of travels in the then almost unknown Canadian Far West, and I was of course glad to do what I could for him at Petersburg, being then again in charge of the Embassy. When he called upon me, however, I soon realised that the intelligence of the author scarcely came up to the reputation of his book, and was considerably distressed when he expressed a wish to see Prince Gortchacow. I, nevertheless, somewhat rashly mentioned him to the Chancelier, who graciously replied that he would be glad to

make the acquaintance of a son of Lord Fitzwilliam. It was a harmless *pose* of his to affect a certain familiarity with English society, about which he really knew very little. The next day, and *très à contre-cœur*, I took my compatriot to the old Prince, who received him with great distinction, and was profuse in offers of service. "What could he do for him? Could he give him an order for anything not generally shown to strangers, &c., &c.?" No; he wanted nothing. At last he said: "Well, if you are so kind as to wish to assist me, I have a favour to ask." "Name it!" said the Prince. "It is for the *babies*," said Lord Milton. My dismay knew no bounds; I feared that *la folie furieuse avait succédé au ramollissement*. "What?" I exclaimed. "What?" echoed the Prince. "I want some rusks for my babies," he calmly replied. In vain I assured him he could get them at any baker's. "No! not those I want. They are only made in the Emperor's kitchen; my courier told me so." "*Comment donc!*!" exclaimed the Chancelier, "I am going to the Council of Ministers, and, on my way, will stop at the Grand Maréchal's. Milord! you shall have your rusks." And he was as good as his word, the rusks coming shortly afterwards, with a note from Jomini which I keep among my *curiosæ*. But they were not the *right ones* after all, and Milton couldn't get over it. Lord Granville,¹ to whom I wrote the story, was much

¹ Foreign Secretary at that time.

amused by it. As for me, I readily forgave poor Lord Milton the painful embarrassment he had caused me, for the sake of his charming and very pretty wife, who skated most gracefully, I remember, and was almost as great a proficient on the ice as my wife.

Beyond skating, one gets no healthy exercise at Petersburg in winter, the heavy furs one has to wear making a real good stretch an impossibility. The fashionable promenade is the Quai de la Cour, which runs along the Winter Palace, and, when strolling there just before the early darkness of winter had set in, it was interesting to note the groups of *gorodovoys* (city police) all on the alert, till presently a tall general officer, in plain military overcoat, would appear, accompanied by a bright-looking girl of about sixteen, with very pretty hair escaping behind from her fur cap, and a couple of big dogs—the Emperor with his daughter and inseparable companion the Grand Duchess Marie, afterwards Duchess of Edinburgh. So great a favourite was she with her father that, at the first reception held by the young princess of foreign *diplomates* to be presented to her, it was said the Emperor stood listening the whole time behind the half-open door. No police precautions, alas! availed to shield this, in many respects admirable, sovereign from the horrible fate that was to overtake him ten years later. I well recollect the news of it coming to me, with a great shock, in a sunny verandah overlooking the broad waters of the River Plate.

The Embassy, this last winter of ours at Petersburg, was much enlivened by the presence of Miss Rashleigh, niece of the Ambassadress, and of Miss Louisa Buchanan, her step-daughter ; additional interest being given to the visit of the latter young lady by an attachment which soon developed between her and our last new Attaché, Sir George Bonham,¹ and which we all conspired to help on to its happy issue. Beyond a few festivities at our Embassy, however, and the stereotyped Court entertainments, the season was a dull one, the great war in the West, which had now culminated in the siege of Paris, casting its gloom over everything. As an interesting incident of this period, I may mention meeting General Todleben at dinner at the Embassy, and hearing him express his views on the difficulties of the investment. The confidential reports he received were, he told us, to the effect that, however large might be the total of the German forces engaged in the field, there were times when the army surrounding Paris, owing to its having to detach large bodies to a distance to check the French advancing to the assistance of the beleaguered capital, was reduced to little more than 200,000 men, and the investing cordon thus became very weak at certain points. The great defender of Sebastopol seemed to be of

¹ Sir George Bonham, Bart., now Envoy at Belgrade. I had the pleasure of having the Bonhams with me many years later at the Legation at the Hague.

opinion that want of unity of design and action on the part of the French commanders, more even than the inferior quality of the troops inside Paris or operating outside for its relief, were the causes of the failure to break through an iron girdle less formidable in reality than it looked.

These great events, which to me were of absorbing interest, on account of my many associations with the country undergoing so terrible an ordeal, kept our hands full at the Embassy. The sincere desire shown by our Government, from the beginning, to afford to the French, in their extremity, such diplomatic assistance as was compatible with neutrality, led to frequent *pour-parlers* with the Imperial Chancellerie, which made St. Petersburg a most active and interesting post. Little justice has been done to us in France for sympathies which grew stronger as the struggle went more and more against her. In Russian society, too, there was a current in favour of the French that was strengthened by the, to say the least, severe proceedings of their conquerors. But the Imperial Government, from motives it was at first difficult to divine, were throughout hostile to France. Nowhere did M. Thiers fail more signally in his patriotic *tournée* than at St. Petersburg. Under these circumstances the blindness of the French Chargé d'Affaires, Marquis de Gabriac, was quite surprising. I had known Joseph de Gabriac as a boy in Paris, and was on very friendly terms

with him, but, as I reported to Lord Granville, it was not a little provoking to hear him expatiating on "*les sympathies Russes pour nous*," and contrasting them with what he called "*votre abandon*" —the truth being that it was the Imperial Government which had all along frustrated every attempt at mediation. I had an unofficial conversation in February of 1871 with the Adjoint, or Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, M. de Westmann—a pale but conscientious reflex of his chief—and was quite taken aback by the severity of his language about the French nation and the future of France. Referring, with much truth, to the mortifying proof afforded by the last elections at Paris (which shortly afterwards led to the Commune) of the unchastened spirit of the Parisian population, he said that the French showed such lack of discipline and impatience of authority that they could only be compared to the Poles. France had long played a leading part in Europe and had wielded great power, but she had made so bad a use of her advantages, that it was not to be regretted that the preponderance to which she had so tenaciously held should now pass to a nation with infinitely more *sens politique*. The final eclipse of France would be no European calamity. In short, M. de Westmann pronounced a complete funeral oration over that unhappy country, entirely leaving out the conventional expressions of regret customary on such occasions.

The motives of the Russian attitude towards the war from the first were made only too clear by the famous Circular of October 31, 1870, denouncing the Black Sea clauses of the Treaty of Paris. Although this act of the Russian Government came upon the diplomatic world as a bolt from the blue, I owe it to the memory of Sir Andrew Buchanan to say that he had, on various occasions, warned our Government that Russia was only watching for a favourable opportunity to cast off the trammels imposed upon her, and which, it is but fair to admit, were intolerable for a great Empire. The grave international offence committed by the Russian Government lay far more in the sensational manner in which the Black Sea clauses were repudiated than in the repudiation itself, and for this objectionable proceeding the vainglorious disposition of Prince Gortchacow is, I think, chiefly accountable.¹ As for our Embassy, we all of us, beginning with the Ambassador, showed a bold front and made no concealment of our belief that the action of the Russian Government would cause great resentment in England,

¹ I was subsequently assured at Constantinople that the issue of the famous Circular was principally due to Prince Gortchacow's learning that General Ignatiew had mooted the abrogation of the neutrality of the Black Sea in conversation with Aali Pasha, and his thereupon determining "to show the world how he could handle that question himself." A draft was submitted to him proposing to the other Powers an amicable discussion of the question, but he was so struck by the tone adopted by Count Bismarck, in treating with Jules Favre at Ferrières, that he would not be outdone, and declared such a tone to be the only one worthy of a great Empire.

and might have very serious consequences. To the freedom of my language on this occasion I owe the epithet of *indiscipline* applied to me by the Chancelier, and the compliment paid me by the Boswell of Prince Bismarck in referring to my personal attitude in this affair.¹

I cannot forget the excitement with which we watched for the arrival of the messenger bringing the answer of her Majesty's Government to the audacious Russian challenge, and how—gathered round Sir Andrew in the Chancery—we listened to Lord Granville's despatch, which opened with a very vigorous and extremely well-worded protest against the defiant breach of Treaty engagements the Russian Government had permitted themselves, but ended, alas! not with the threat of at least a diplomatic rupture, but with a peroration leaving the door wide open for further discussion. We were much disgusted, and all the more so that our Government, by assuming a firmer attitude, might probably have procured the withdrawal of the offensive Circular and the substitution for it of a reference, in more suitable terms, of the Russian grievances to the other co-signatory Powers. Russia, and still more her Prussian aiders and abettors, above all dreaded a general war; and would have done much to avoid one, and although

¹ In Busch, vol. ii. p. 43 of the 1898 edition (Macmillan), I am spoken of in the following terms: "Horace Rumbold, the English Chargé d'Affaires in St. Petersburg, is stated, in a report from that capital, to be vehemently hostile to Prussia as well as to Russia."

it was sedulously given out at the time that the Gortchacow Circular had caused surprise and resentment at Berlin, the fact that the initiative for the subsequent Conference emanated from thence was a sufficient indication of the previous understanding between the two Powers.

The Conference met in London in January, and, in a protocol attached to the instrument it drew up, a mild form of censure was applied to Russia by the declaration that no Power could liberate itself from the obligations of a Treaty without the consent of the other parties to it. At Petersburg, in the great pæan that followed, no notice whatever was taken of this international rebuke. The Emperor ordered a Te Deum to be sung in the Chapel of the Winter Palace, in honour of the conclusion of the Treaty abrogating the neutralisation of the Euxine, afterwards, it was said, publicly embracing the Chancellor of the Empire. He then went to the Cathedral of St. Peter and St. Paul in the Fortress, where his ancestors are interred, and prayed there for some time, with signs of deep emotion, at the tomb of his father, saying to his suite as he left that he trusted the shade of the Emperor Nicholas would now be appeased. Finally, to mark the success of the confederates, came the telegrams exchanged between Versailles and St. Petersburg on the signature of the preliminaries of peace with France, when the new Emperor "returned thanks, next to Divine Providence, to his

Russian ally for his efforts to circumscribe the area of the war," while the Emperor Alexander, on his side, expressed "the hope that the glory no less than the happiness of the two countries would be assured by the friendship uniting their two sovereigns." The triumphant repeal of the Black Sea clauses was certainly a signal reparation for the Crimean War, for which the Emperor Napoleon had been mainly answerable; but the fact that it was, in great measure, obtained by favouring the defeat and humiliation of the French nation, surely throws a singular light on the intimacy and alliance of latter days. All these events, however, belong to so remote a past that I feel some diffidence in reviving them in these pages. I was now on the point of leaving Russia for good, and took away from there two lessons, which I carried with me throughout my diplomatic life: the first being that the foremost object at Berlin will ever be to make sure of, and propitiate, the great northern neighbour; and the second that, having regard to the formidable growth of the German power (so injudiciously fostered by Russia,¹) and the extraordinary ill-will towards ourselves that has accompanied it, it well behoves us to seek some *rapprochement* with Russia on the questions which, as the two leading Asiatic Powers, at present divide us. I am one of those who believe such an understanding to

¹ The Dual Alliance is in part an effort to repair, however tardily, the great mistake committed at St. Petersburg in allowing France to be so utterly crushed.

be quite possible, if only we could in this country shake off the traditional distrust of Russia, which I hold to be both mischievous and unreasonable, or, at any rate, avoid manifesting it so offensively. Certainly there is no need to look as far as Petersburg for instances of a tortuous policy.

On the 30th March I was appointed Secretary of Embassy at Constantinople, a move that was welcome to me in some ways, and principally on account of my wife's health, which was much tried by the climate and the artificial life and late hours of Petersburg. The expense, too, of the place was greater than I could afford to face for any length of time. We had made so many friends, however, in Russia, that it was impossible to part from them without a pang. No kindlier people are to be found anywhere than among the best class of Russians, and I shall always look back to my three years in Russia as some of the happiest of my chequered diplomatic career. It is true that, in my time, no such barrier had been erected against foreigners in Petersburg society as that of which I have since heard complaints, and which probably originated in the marked dislike shown by the then Tsarewitch, afterwards Alexander III., to all that was German. We left Petersburg on the 10th of April with heavy hearts. The last words to me of the friendly old Chancelier, when I went to take leave of him, were the bantering caution : " *J'espère que vous ne nous ferez pas trop de mal à Constantinople !*"

CHAPTER XXIV

CONSTANTINOPLE, 1871-1873

ON leaving Russia we shaped our course by easy stages through Berlin, Dresden, Hof, and Augsburg to the old, familiar quarters at Berne which had in some sort become a second home to us. We found installed here at the Legation John Lumley's successor, Mr Bonar, with two amiable sisters, one of whom was married to Henry Lockwood, who had formerly been in the Diplomatic Service. The excellent Bonar was a curious mixture of stateliness and simplicity, and, in these respects, quite belonged to a bygone age. His diplomatic life had been spent almost entirely between Munich and Vienna, and being passionately fond of sport, and a first-class shot, he had had a very good time of it. He was a frequent guest at the Schwarzenberg shooting parties, and Prince Adolf told me that one of his father's best coverts at Frauenberg was called after *der gute Bonar*. Living a good deal with these Austrian grandees, he had acquired what I would call a mediatised air and manner, and quaint, artless, feudal views of life which were most amusing in their way. Among other incidents of his earlier days he had gone to a Court ball at Munich

in full Highland dress—presumably as “the Bonar,” or chief of his clan, in which he firmly believed—but had been refused admittance, the scantiness of the garb of old Gaul being too much for the Bavarian Court officials. The harmless peculiarities to which I have adverted did not prevent his being the most warm-hearted and hospitable of men, and he showed us much kindness. He retired not long afterwards, and ended his days at Gratz—the Cheltenham of Austria—like any K.K. Feldmarschall Leutnant on half-pay. Peace be to the ashes of this most worthy sportsman and gentleman, albeit mediocre diplomatist!

The Joanninis, who had now left Belgrade, soon joined us at Berne, and we took a house together at Thun for the summer months, as I was not wanted at my new post before August. The climate of St. Petersburg had told on me scarcely less than on my wife, and early in May I was advised to go for a cure to Kissingen. This was my first experience of life at a genuine German watering-place, for frivolous, dissipated Baden-Baden is not to be reckoned in the same category with these serious resorts where, to any one following the treatment as conscientiously as I did, existence is a real penance from early dawn to dewy eve. Excepting a pleasant Russian couple of the name of Zouboff, there was not a soul in the place I had ever seen before, and but for the excitement and horror produced in me by the news of the sinister deeds of the Paris

Commune, the three weeks I spent in the uninteresting valley watered by the languid Saale would be almost a complete blank in my memory.

I was glad to get away from the monotonous grind and wretched *Gerstenschleim*¹ diet of Kissingen to London, where I spent exactly a fortnight in June. I had here a very unpleasant experience, which later on seriously affected my interests. I proposed myself to a Life Office which shall be nameless, where I already held a policy of a moderate amount, for a further insurance, on purely prudential grounds, and was quite unexpectedly rejected. I found the letter from the Company, I too well remember, on returning home one evening to my lodging in St. James's Place to dress for a ball at Stafford House, and was so upset by it that I took to my bed with a severe nervous shock, and sent for my kind friend Dr. Chepmell, who greatly interested himself in my case, which he compared to the effects on the system of a bad railway accident. In a couple of days, however, he enabled me, although still ill and shaky, to start on my return to my family. My undeserved mishap was in reality due to the Kissingen waters having pulled me down very much, and to the Company's blundering doctor mistaking my weakened condition for symptoms of organic disease. Writing, even at this distance of thirty years, I cannot forgive the man, if he be still alive, who did me this injury;

¹ Barley soup, the dish recommended to their patients by the Kissingen doctors for supper—*pour tout potage*, as one may well say.

Although we were much opposed to this step, the peace and content she has unquestionably found have reconciled us to it, and it is a real pleasure to us, coming from the vexing fret and worry of the outer world, to visit her in her calm retreat behind the soothing, "narrowing nunnery walls."

We left Thun on the 15th of August, and drove over the beautiful Brünig Pass to Lucerne, making a halt of some days at the very comfortable Kaltbad establishment on the Righi, which, together with the cog-wheel railroad up that mountain, was then among the novelties of Switzerland. Here I for the first time set eyes on one of the most eminent of our statesmen, with a large family party, who kept entirely to themselves, and struck me—not knowing who they were—by what I suppose I may term the studied simplicity of their tourist garments. The Charles de Talleyrands, too, contrastingly spick and span, were here with her very pretty sister, Madame de Perchenstein. High up in this serene mountain atmosphere, which might, I frankly admit, have produced in me a more placid mood, I put the last touches to a bitter political pamphlet, entitled, "Prussian Aggrandisement and English Policy," in which I poured out the vials of wrath accumulated in me by Prussian triumphs and bumptiousness, and more than earned the character for hostility attributed to me at Berlin.

On departing from the Kaltbad on the 28th, I remember we were much amused and parentally

bered, that Tortola itself had been submerged, and every soul on the island had perished.¹ The Government House, at any rate, was completely wrecked, and my brother's wife, never a strong woman, succumbed to the effects on her health of the tempest and the violent shocks of earthquake that accompanied it. After her death my poor brother came home, himself entirely unhinged, and led a strange, roaming life, during which he caused us much anxiety. He became a Roman Catholic, and finally surprised us, shortly after our arrival in Russia, by a letter, written from Gravesend, announcing his marriage the day before to a Miss Hopewell, and their being on their way to pay us a visit at St. Petersburg. My new and attractive sister-in-law, for whom I later acquired a very sincere regard, went with her husband on his return to his distant exile, only to become a widow within a short year (my brother died at St. Thomas on the 12th of June 1869), and the mother of a posthumous son, whom she had the misfortune to lose at Florence at the age of eight. Being bereft of all joy and interest in life, she before long retired to a convent, and at the present day is Lady Superior of the house of the Sacred Heart at Hammersmith.

¹ A question was put in the House on the subject to Mr. Disraeli by some Member who desired information, among other points, as to the geographical whereabouts of the scene of the catastrophe. "I cannot," replied the Minister, "give the Honourable Member, thus off-hand, the exact position of the Virgin Islands, but think it safe to say that they are a long way removed from the Isle of Man."

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gratified, in the car that took us down to Vitznau, by the outspoken admiration of our fellow-passengers for our infant boy Willie—now a gunner doing good and arduous service with the Uganda Rifles—who certainly was then a very creditable specimen of British babyhood. Having to travel slowly, on account of his mother's delicate state of health, we broke our journey at Zurich and Chur, reaching Bellagio, where we again rested a day or two, by way of the splendid Splügen. We then went on to Verona, and thence, with a mere glimpse at Venice, to Trieste to catch the Austrian Lloyd steamer for Constantinople. The Consulate at Trieste was apparently looked upon by the Foreign Office at that period as a sort of shunting place for distinguished literary men, being then held by Charles Lever, as it later on was by Richard Burton. Poor Lever! How he hated his post will be seen from the description he gave me of it in a letter written some years before: "Trieste is a vile place, half Holywell and half Wapping. Whatever is not skipper is Jew. The whole talk of the people is molasses and elephants' teeth, and I curse the day and the hour that I accepted it." We spent a delightful day with him and his family, and I then first made acquaintance with his clever, downright daughter, "Jack"—the image of her father—whom I was to see a great deal of many years later, as Mrs. Nevill, at Hyderabad of all places in the world. From Trieste we had an excellent passage in the

Lloyd steamer *Mars*, getting at last to our destination on the morning of the 8th of September.

The Embassy House, a massive pile well known to all British travellers in the East, had been in great part destroyed in the terrible conflagration which had laid two-thirds of Pera in ashes almost exactly fifteen months before our arrival at Constantinople. The outer walls had withstood the fire, and the vaulted ground floor, containing the Chancery and Archives,¹ and the rooms of some of the Secretaries, remained practically untouched;—but pending the restoration of the State rooms and other apartments on the upper floors, which were entirely gutted—the Government had engaged the Hôtel d'Angleterre, next to and overlooking the Embassy garden, for the accommodation of the Ambassador and his family. At this time of year my old friend, Sir Henry Elliot, whom I was delighted to have for a chief, was at his summer quarters at Therapia, and he most kindly proposed that we should occupy the now empty house provided for him at Pera. Here we lived all through our stay and were very comfortable, but for the difficulty we found in keeping ourselves warm when the short, but sharp, winter set in about Christmas-time, and the temperature in my wife's sitting-room seldom exceeded fifty-five

¹ The fire took place on the 6th of June 1870. A most graphic description of it is given in Sir Henry Elliot's "Diplomatic Recollections," printed for private circulation. Sir Henry lost most of his private effects in endeavouring to save the Government House and property.

degrees, in spite of blazing fires. In this house my third boy, George, was born on the 30th of October, George Elliot, then on a visit to his brother, the Ambassador, being his godfather.

The staff of the Embassy when I joined it was composed of Dudley Saurin, John Gordon Kennedy¹ (both of these soon left us), Lionel Moore, and Hubert Jerningham. The cheery, boisterous "Irish Arab," whom I had known full of health and spirits during the flying visit I had made here from Athens some years before, had now been reduced to a sad wreck by some insidious disease, and shortly went home for good, leaving Jerningham alone in the Chancery. I found in Jerningham a very pleasant fellow-worker and colleague. He had the advantage for a diplomatist of being distinctly cosmopolitan, and, having been brought up almost entirely in France, was an accomplished French scholar. Paris, which he had left at the beginning of the *année terrible*, had been his last post, and his name might well figure in the festive records of the Tuilleries as a successful leader of *cotillons* at the poor Empress's last brilliant *Lundis*. He has since found full scope for his abilities in a distinguished Colonial career.²

I was soon, however, to find out that Constantinople was not as other posts, and that one had to depend, for the most essential work, upon the

¹ Sir John Kennedy, K.C.M.G., is now Envoy at Bucharest.

² Sir Hubert Jerningham, K.C.M.G., left the Diplomatic for the Colonial Service, and was afterwards Governor of Mauritius and of Trinidad.

dragomans, through whom the relations with the Porte were carried on, and who, under a system then already antiquated and soon to be exploded, were recruited from amongst Levantines more or less under British protection. The Pisani dynasty were still masters of the situation when I arrived. Under the, in many ways unfortunate, tenure of the Embassy by Sir Henry Bulwer, Alexander Pisani, best known as "the Count," who was simply the keeper of the Archives, had been made head of the Diplomatic Chancellerie of the Embassy, to the intense disgust of successive Secretaries properly belonging to the service. Pisani, it was said, had extorted this abnormal appointment from his chief by threatening to resign and write his memoirs. Henry Labouchere, among others, greatly resented the arrangement. Some years before he had had a passage of arms with the Count, who had reproved him, so to speak officially, for absenting himself for the day from the Chancery on some occasion without applying to him for leave to do so. The ridiculous affair was referred to Sir Henry Bulwer, and gave my friend Labby a charming opportunity of describing the Count in a formal letter to the Ambassador. "It seems to me a singular dispensation," he wrote, "that places a Greek nobleman of Venetian extraction, who has profited by the advantages of a Pera education, in authority over a body of English gentlemen." The fussy old Count was a curiosity in his way. He had been at the Congress

of Verona in 1822 with Lord Strangford, and must have been close upon ninety when he died in 1886. He and I got on very well together, and his prodigious knowledge of every case that had arisen for over half a century was invaluable to me, though I confess I dreaded the piles of documents he would send over from the Chancery, when asked for information on one of the numerous affairs referred to us from the Consulates, many of which were of old standing. The work one had to attend to in this respect was very heavy indeed. But the "dispensation" under which I most groaned was that which had installed the Count's cousin, Etienne, as our first dragoman. Very ugly stories were told of the corruption of this clever, wily Perote, to whose shifty looks and pliant manner I took a dislike from the first. When I thought of the snug little *tchiflik*¹ on the Bosphorus he had acquired through sources it was best not to inquire into, and felt that our interests were practically in the hands of such a go-between in all our dealings with the Turkish authorities, the dragomanic "dispensation" vexed me beyond measure. I am glad to think that things have since entirely changed in this respect, our interpreters now being *bonâ-fide* British subjects trained for the work, and who, though they may not have all the Levantine suppleness, can be relied upon to faithfully and honestly carry out the instructions given them.

¹ Farm.

We had at the great Embassies at Constantinople a few interesting people, and the *corps diplomatique* was fortunately numerous and afforded sufficient social resources, there being practically no general society beyond that of the richer Greeks and Armenians with whom one scarcely mixed at all. The Comte de Vogüé, whom I remembered from old Parisian days, was the French Ambassador, and a rare type of a *grand seigneur* in the Diplomatic Service of his country, of which almost the only other specimen remaining, the Marquis de Noailles, is now retiring from Berlin. M. de Vogüé, six feet two or three in height, with his knightly build and bearing and charming manners, was an ideal Ambassador, and he and his wife, a Mademoiselle de Mérinville, who conceived a great liking for mine, were the best of colleagues. Vogüé's heart, however, was set far more on archæological and literary pursuits than on his diplomatic duties, and he felt but little at home amongst more or less petty intrigues, the watching and counter-acting of which made up so much of the current work at Constantinople. At the German Embassy we had M. de Radowitz, who for a long time acted as Chargé d'Affaires, and ultimately became Ambassador to the Porte, a post he afterwards exchanged for Madrid. With him and his Russian wife, *née* Ozerow, whose family we had known at Berne, we established the most harmonious relations. Radowitz was an excellent sample of

the Prussian soldier-diplomatist — he had gone through the Sadowa campaign and the Franco-German War on the staff of Prince Frederick Charles — and was, of my various German colleagues, the one with whom I worked together the most cordially, the similarity of our views as to the rottenness of the Porte, and the extent to which it was then under baneful Russian influences, being a great bond between us.

By far the most important, though by no means an imposing, figure of those days in our diplomatic world was the Russian Ambassador, General Ignatiew. More than has been the case with any representative of his country since the days of the browbeating Menschikow, the General and his doings have become such public property that I think I may risk recording frankly my impressions of him, even though he be still in the land of the living. In the legends that have grown up around his name the hardest things have been said of him, and beyond all other diplomats, past and present, he is held to have exemplified Sir Henry Wotton's fine old definition of the proper uses of an Ambassador. The "father of lies," as he has been freely termed, was, I believe, in reality constitutionally inaccurate. Almost naïvely so, in fact, his misstatements being often absurdly objectless. Lord Lyons used to say that whenever the General came to see him at Therapia, and, when asked whether he had come by road

or by water, replied, *e.g.*, that he had driven out in his carriage, one might be certain to see his *caique* alongside the Embassy quay, or the reverse, as the case might be. Hitrovo, one of his staff, told me that he was standing talking to him one day in the Grande Rue at Pera, when some Turkish troopers, passing on their way to their barracks at the Taxim, deliberately hustled the Ambassador so roughly—a pleasant way the soldiery had at this period, and from which even ladies were not safe—that he lost his balance and was nearly knocked over. Hitrovo went after the fellows with his stick, but they, realising they had to do with important people, fled up the hill. When he rejoined him, his chief exclaimed, to his amazement: “*Vous avez vu comme je les ai fait fuire !*” In fact, as the lamb innocently and unconsciously bleats, so did the general tell his little fibs. Not that he failed to be unveracious *en grand* with an object and to good purpose, but that he was so constituted that inaccuracy oozed out of him, as it were. He is said actually to have pleaded hereditary tendencies on the point. On some occasion when he had made an unusually startling statement to a colleague with whom he was on intimate terms, the latter, with a friendly dig in the ribs, told him he was really surpassing himself. “*Vous me flattez trop, mon cher,*” replied the General, “*vous n'avez pas connu mon père.*” With all this, a pleasant-mannered man and a most amusing companion,

even though his vulpine Tartar countenance and crafty eyes told against him from the first. The graceful, high-bred Madame Ignatiew, a Princesse Galitzine, did the honours of the Russian Embassy quite charmingly.

About a month after my arrival there was a bad outbreak of cholera at Constantinople, which, on the Pera side, was mostly confined to the populous suburbs, like Kassim Pasha, down by the waters of the Golden Horn. A sanitary cordon of sentries was drawn just beyond the Embassy garden and the houses, including the one we lived in, that stand on the ridge above the cemetery, known as the Petit Champ des Morts, which stretches down to the infected districts. The weather was still very hot, and remained so until well into November; indeed, nothing could exceed the beauty of this autumn season on the Bosphorus. Unfortunately the heat of course increased the virulence of the epidemic, which at one time threatened to assume formidable proportions. Its worst centre was the more distant suburb of Hasskeui, situated higher up the Golden Horn, where a large number of English engineers, employed at the Arsenal, lived with their families. Outcries soon reached the Embassy and the Consulate-General from these poor people, who, being rigidly hedged in by a sanitary cordon, were not only left without adequate medical assistance, but were deprived in some measure of the necessities of life, which

had to be fetched from certain points within the cordon, whither they were brought in insufficient quantities from the outside. Sir Henry came up one day from Therapia to visit the scene of this calamity, and rode out there with the Consul General, Sir Philip Francis, a clever doctor of the name of Paterson who was attached to the Consulate, one of the dragomans, and myself. The ambassadorial cavalcade, preceded by *cavasses*, was at once let through the cordon, and we spent the afternoon interviewing and inquiring into the wants of the unfortunate inhabitants, who were panic-stricken at being inhumanly confined to a place the air of which was poisoned by open sewers and reeked with the emanations from a large slaughter-house close by. The whole suburb was a veritable pest-house, and the percentage of fatal cases among the women and children and old people showed how greatly the terrors of the situation told upon the mortality. The Ambassador arranged that Doctor Paterson should have free access to them, and, after considerable difficulty, the Porte agreed to remove the wretched community at night to some hulks that lay at a distance outside the harbour in the Sea of Marmora. What struck me most about this expedition was the absurdity of our being permitted to go in and out of this rigid cordon, and hence the fallacy of the entire system, for our party, in returning to their several homes, logically became so many plague-spots imported

into the uncontaminated area. But these severe quarantine measures, even when most strictly and intelligently enforced, are only useful for confining the malady to some particular spot on its first appearance, and, applied too late, as they had been in this case, only occasion useless hardship and suffering. The epidemic of 1871-72, which broke out at the beginning of October and lasted till the middle of January, will long be remembered for the barbarities attending it.

Sir Philip Francis, with whom I had a good deal to do in connection with this cholera affair and others, was a very able official, and worked hard, with good effect, at checking the abuses of the Turkish system and the gross neglect of the Turkish authorities in all municipal concerns. Francis was, besides, a most agreeable companion, and had a caustic wit well worthy of his celebrated namesake, the supposed Junius, with whom, by the way, he disclaimed all connection, frankly and jokingly describing himself as being of no family in particular. He died early, and was a distinct loss to the Consular Service. Another Constantinople character of that period was Hobart Pasha.¹ After showing himself the most daring of blockade runners in the civil war in the United States, he had done the Turkish Government good service in blockading the coast of the Island of

¹ Vice-Admiral the Honourable H. C. Hobart, third son of the 6th Earl of Buckinghamshire.

Crete during the insurrection of 1867-68. The vessels he had then had under his orders, and on which so much money, wrung from the unfortunate tax-payers of the decaying Empire, had been wasted, now lay at anchor in the Golden Horn, half dismantled and quite unfit to go to sea, while their gallant commander was kept equally idle—held in leash, as it were, like the British bulldog he was for pluck and tenacity—by his Turkish employers. He greatly fumed and fretted over this enforced inaction, in a ramshackle house in one of the steep lanes that branch down to the water from the main street of Pera, and in winter are only accessible in a sedan-chair. Here he and his wife and a nice-looking niece of hers made one very welcome. Dauntless, though somewhat tactless, and, as he has been well described, “a bold buccaneer of the Elizabethan period, who by some strange perversion of fate was born into the Victorian,” Hobart certainly deserved a better fate than to vegetate in the service of the unspeakable Turk.

In January 1872 the Elliots left for England on four months' leave, and I assumed 'charge of the Embassy under, as it turned out, very unfavourable circumstances. I still to some extent suffered from nervous depression, one of the after effects of my insurance mishap in London; and the irritating climate of the Bosphorus, too, told upon me as it does on many people. Scarcely

had the Ambassador left, when I felt so seriously unwell that I sent for Dickson, the physician to the Embassy, who, as soon as he entered the room, burst out laughing in my face and said: "Go to bed at once; you have got the measles!" Nothing could be more annoying, situated as I was, but fortunately the attack was slight, and, more fortunately still, my devoted little wife enabled me to carry on the indispensable Embassy work after a fashion, by writing my despatches for me under dictation. I must also do my *bête noire*, Etienne Pisani, the justice to say that he reported to me regularly all through my illness without showing any fear of infection. I recovered very soon, and in fact felt all the better for this visitation.

About this time it was that my weakness for theatricals led me into a trap adroitly set for me by the wily Russian Ambassador. It was Madame Onou—the wife of the Russian First Dragoman, and step-daughter of Jomini of the Imperial Chancellerie at Petersburg, a very clever woman and a good actress—who enticed me into taking part in a performance at the Russian Embassy, which both she and the Ambassador positively assured me would be quite private, the audience being limited to a few colleagues and other friends. Quite *un spectacle intime*. I had misgivings as to the propriety of lending myself to anything of the kind in my

present position of Chargé d'Affaires, but allowed myself to be talked over, and was soon hard at work rehearsing the difficult part of the husband in Octave Feuillet's *Péril en la Demeure*. Madame Onou herself played the Baronne de Vitré, and my wife, who showed very great aptitude for acting, gave a charming rendering of the Madame de la Roseraie, round whose peril the plot of this well-known play turns.¹ Hubert Jerningham likewise acquitted himself well, and the performance was, on the whole, praiseworthy. Short-sighted, however, as I am, my equanimity and, to some extent, the fortunes of the piece were put to a sore trial when on reaching the footlights I at once realised that the front row of seats was almost entirely occupied by high Turkish officials, including the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Server Pasha! It was, in Yankee parlance, a smart trick on the part of the general, but in diplomacy, more even than in love or war, all stratagems are permissible. Given Turkish ideas, the sight of the British representative—though only an ephemeral Chargé d'Affaires—buffooning on the stage for the amusement of the dignitaries of the Porte, was one scarcely calculated to improve his standing with the Ottoman Government. At the mature age of past forty I ought assuredly to have known better.

I fell upon relatively uneventful times during

¹ The English version of this play, by Tom Taylor, is called "The House and the Home," and was written for the *Wigana*.

my four months' Charge^{ship} at Constantinople—the lull, in fact, in European affairs that followed upon the great Franco-German struggle. There was none the less plenty to watch and to report upon. That very distinguished statesman, Aali Pasha, had died a few days before my arrival in September. His successor, Mahmoud Nedim, came into office with a very commendable programme, the chief points of which were administrative reform and a strict enforcement of economy in all branches of the expenditure. The new Grand Vizier was a Turk of the old school, and reputed to be honest and trustworthy in his dealings, though later on he showed himself so subservient to Russian influences as to earn the nickname of Mahmoudoff. At first, however, he was much less transparently Russian than the Foreign Minister, Server Pasha. Unfortunately, unlike his polished predecessors, Fuad and Aali, Mahmoud was ignorant of any language but Turkish, and this placed me, in my intercourse with him, more or less at the mercy of an interpreter whom I greatly mistrusted. My interviews with this genuine old Osmanli were thus attended with much vexation and annoyance to me. My visits to him were pretty frequent, being—quite irrespective of political questions—taken up in urging, as best I could, the redress of some grievance, or the settlement of some old claim regarding which promise upon promise had been repeatedly made and as repeatedly

broken. The only mode that suggested itself to me of convincing the officials at the Porte, and more especially the Grand Vizier, that I was very much in earnest in these troublesome affairs—mostly sent up to us from our Consulates in distant provinces—was to bring home that fact to Pisani himself. I made it a rule, therefore, to send for him and hold to him the very language I wished to be conveyed by him, using the strongest terms, blowing him up vicariously, as it were, and thoroughly washing his dirty old Levantine head in the hope that some, at least, of the impression I had produced upon him might be passed on, when he presently told the Grand Vizier what this unreasonable Englishman wanted and had come to insist upon.

I generally went to the Porte about two o'clock, and found Mahmoud in a somewhat torpid condition after his midday meal. The preliminary courtesies accomplished, I proceeded to business by repeating in brief to Pisani what I had already tried to hammer into him, and he would then begin translating—I fondly hoped in some degree faithfully—what I had said. The Grand Vizier, after resuming his seat on the divan, soon relapsed into his familiar native attitude, tucking up his legs and crossing them on the cushions in true Oriental fashion. He would then remain perfectly stolid and immovable all through Pisani's discourse, and, at the end of it, would, to my distress and disgust, open his jaws as wide as he could and give two or three mighty

yawns, like a wild beast in a menagerie, when one stands watching him in front of his bars. These—probably dyspeptic—manifestations mortified me more than I can say, and I generally left the old Pasha in a most despondent frame of mind. I soon found, however, that the best way of expediting an affair was to go to whatever department it concerned at the Porte, and state that I proposed staying there until I had assured myself that the orders repeatedly promised me had been issued. Finding they could not get rid of me, they often ended by doing what I wanted. I wasted a good many afternoons in this way, but generally carried my point, and among the *chers collègues* was considered to be very successful in getting my complaints attended to.

Much the most important political question I had to do with was the long-standing quarrel which then came to a climax between the Greek Patriarchate and the Bulgarian clergy. It arose out of the firman of 1870, by which, under the administration of Aali Pasha, certain concessions, amounting practically to autonomy in ecclesiastical matters, had been granted to the Bulgarians. Of these the most essential was the creation of a Bulgarian Exarchate which was, however, still to remain subject to the spiritual supremacy of the Ecumenical Patriarch. In according these concessions, long agitated for by the Bulgarians, Aali Pasha had been moved partly by the old principle, dear to despotic governments,

of *divide et impera*, and partly by a dislike to and distrust of the Greeks, traditional at the Porte, but which was now quite out of date, seeing how greatly diminished were the power and influence formerly wielded by the Patriarchate throughout the Eastern world down even to the Greek revolution and the martyrdom of the venerable Gregorios. In favouring the Bulgarians at the expense of the Greeks, Aali Pasha and his successor imprudently lost sight of the fact that, in all the regions at that time still subject to Ottoman rule, the Church in a great measure embodied the national sentiment, so that, in preparing the birth of a free Bulgarian Church polity, they awakened partially dormant political aspirations, and fostered the growth of a distinct Bulgarian nationality. Of Bulgarians in Turkey there were, of course, a couple of millions or so—humble, laborious folk, excellent at agricultural work, and perfectly phenomenal as *hammals* (porters)—I once met one carrying a piano on his broad back up the steepest pitch of the Grande Rue—but, excepting in the inner consciousness of the students at the Roberts College, a Bulgarian nation was scarcely dreamt of at that time. I took it upon myself to call the Grand Vizier's attention to the dangers I apprehended, but the weight and influence of a Chargé d'Affaires are so small compared to those of an Ambassador, that I could not hope to effect much. Nevertheless I worked hard—I might almost say single-handed, the Foreign Office strangely

taking but little interest in the affair—to stave off a final rupture between the Patriarchate and the Bulgarian bishops. The blindness and fanaticism, however, of the effete old Patriarch—a man of ninety—and the weakness of the Grand Vizier, insidiously guided by General Ignatiew, eventually led to an irremediable breach which had far-reaching consequences for the authority of the Porte and, among other things, contributed to bring about the disastrous Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78.

To give him his due, the Russian Ambassador showed much skill and prescience in this matter. He for some time affected complete abstention and neutrality—his hands being no doubt tied by instructions from Prince Gortchacow—but early in February he admitted to one of his colleagues, in a conversation which came to my knowledge, that his policy, the only true and natural one for a Russian, was to stand by his Slav co-religionists, and that he had strongly urged the Porte to concede the Bulgarian demands. Being in one of his indiscreet, boastful moods, he added that his line of conduct with the Ottoman Government was simply to make them realise that they must lean on Russia, whether they liked or not, since Russia controlled all the Slav races of the Empire, and could use them as she pleased, either for or against their rulers. The position of Russia, he said, was made so strong by this Slav connection, that she alone of all the Powers could afford to follow an audacious

(sic) policy towards Turkey. I suspect that in this business Ignatiew scored off Prince Gortchacow, who could not abide him, and probably hampered the Ambassador as much as he could. I recollect Ignatiew on one occasion coming to Petersburg—on leave of absence no doubt granted him unwillingly—and his friends in the Panslavist press and others giving out that he had really been sent for to replace the old Chancelier. This time, however, the scoring was on the side of the Prince, who, when the General returned to his post empty-handed, maliciously expressed his disappointment at having reluctantly convinced himself that the man whom he had always looked upon as his successor was by no means of the calibre to relieve him of the heavy cares of office.

In this ecclesiastical conflict the Cabinet of Vienna likewise unfortunately favoured the Bulgarian pretensions; Count Andrassy vainly imagining that he could compete in it with Russia, and thus acquire a lead with an important section of the Southern Slavs still subject to Turkey. In the question of the succession to the throne, the Austro-Hungarian Premier was also ill-inspired. He privately instructed the Austrian Minister, Count Ludulf, to back up, if necessary, the project which the Sultan Abdul Aziz was believed to meditate of changing the order of succession hitherto obtaining in the Imperial family, and substituting for it primogeniture in the direct line of his own descendants,

thereby making his eldest son, Youssouff Izzedin, his heir in the place of Murad Effendi (afterwards Murad V.), the eldest son of the late Sultan Abdul Medjid. The change in this sense already effected in Egypt was supposed to have been sanctioned by the sovereign with the object of creating a precedent for his own family.

I soon ascertained that so radical an alteration in the laws of the State was viewed with apprehension at our Foreign Office as being fraught with peril to the Sultan, who, by attempting it, would run counter to the traditions and sentiments of his subjects. When, therefore, Count Ludolf—an amiable but very weak man—mentioned his instructions to me, I frankly told him that I did not think the course his chief proposed to himself of running races with Russia for the Sultan's favour a very judicious one, and added that I should probably find it my duty to discourage, as far as I could, what was considered by our Government to be the dangerous design harboured by the Sultan. There were ominous indications of its being intended to carry out that design suddenly and without any warning. Yousouf Izzedin, only a boy of fourteen, had been appointed to the command of the 1st Army Corps, composed of the Imperial Guard, and was encouraged to show himself a great deal in the barracks and curry favour with the soldiers, much to the detriment of discipline among these praetorians. Most significant of all was the report that the

Sheik-ul-Islam had been gained over by the Sultan, and was prepared to issue a *fetvah* sanctifying the proposed change by authority derived from the Koran. The crisis appeared thus to be imminent, but it was nevertheless desirable that I should avoid moving at all openly in a question which most true Moslems deemed unfit for discussion with an unbeliever. I sent for Dickson—an exceedingly shrewd man, though but a poor physician—who, through attending their *harems*, had considerable influence with some of the Pashas, and told him to take an early opportunity of letting the Grand Vizier and other influential dignitaries know privately what were the sentiments of our Government on the subject. I cannot say whether this contributed to the abandonment of the scheme, but before long it was certainly dropped.

Abdul Aziz at this period revealed some of the tendencies which have since been so disastrously discernible in the reigning Sultan. Like him he was disposed to assume a more direct share in the government of the Empire, and to curtail the authority of his counsellors at the Porte. Like him he favoured the movement tending towards a revival of militant Islamism, which in the latter days of those Frenchified statesmen Aali and Fuad, who were imbued with Western ideas, was quite unheard of. In smaller matters, too, such as the severe repression of the habit adopted by many of the Turkish ladies of visiting the millinery and other

stores at Pera in the most transparent of *yashmaks*, the Sultan showed the old retrograde Mussulman spirit.

Unlike his present successor, Abdul Aziz granted but few audiences. I only saw him once, as it happened, at a short distance. One morning in April Mme. de Vogué sent us word to come at once to the French Embassy, the garden of which overlooked the entrance to the Austrian Embassy, as the Sultan was expected there to return the visit of the Archduke Charles Louis, then on his way to the Holy Land. Very soon a few Imperial *cavasses* in gorgeous array debouched from the open square of Tophaneh, not two hundred yards off, into the narrow street below us, followed by a small group of officers in very smart uniforms, immediately preceding the Padischah, who was mounted on a beautiful Arab with splendid gold trappings, behind which came an equally fine spare horse similarly caparisoned; then more officers, *cavasses*, *tchiboukdjis*, &c., and, bringing up the rear, a motley gang of Oriental tag-rag and bobtail, the meagre cortège thus presenting the strangest mixture of finery and squalor. The Sultan himself, wearing the ordinary Turkish-cut frock-coat and fez, slouched in the saddle with bent head, so that we, looking down upon him, could scarcely discern his features. He dismounted at the Embassy door, where the Archduke, in his spruce white tunic, was waiting to receive him, and vanished into the house for a

most a quarter of an hour. The younger officers of the Imperial suite meanwhile lounged about the entrance, twirling their moustaches and ogling the bright cluster of foreign ladies who stood by the high garden wall over against them. Suddenly there occurred the funniest of transformations. The brilliant group, cheekily airing their graces for the benefit of Giaour womankind, were apparently seized simultaneously with severe internal discomfort, clapping their hands to their stomachs, and bending in two as if in great pain. It was of course only the grotesque form of grovelling Eastern obeisance which heralded the approach of their master—the Sultan immediately after passing out and mounting—but the general effect was in the highest degree absurd. I never had another chance of seeing the sovereign who not long after met with so tragical and mysterious an end.¹

A more renowned royal personage than the Archduke visited Constantinople about this time—namely, Prince Frederick Charles of Prussia. He was received with exceptional honours and lodged at one of the Imperial Kiosks on the Bosphorus, the Sultan paying him the unusual compliment of entertaining him at a splendid banquet in the Palace of Dolma Bagtchê. I asked a German friend, who saw a good deal of him, what the Prince thought of

¹ Sir Henry Elliot, in his "Diplomatic Recollections," quotes what seems irrefutable medical evidence showing that the Sultan committed suicide.

the Imperial Court. What had impressed him most, said my friend, was the magnificent gold service used at the state banquet: "Das hat ihm imponirt." Prince Frederick Charles's stay coincided with that of General Sherman, who was doing the stereotyped American grand tour with young Frederick Grant, the son of the President, whom the Turks, by the way, treated at first like a sort of heir-apparent or American Prince of Wales, till they were told of their mistake. The two eminent *foudres de guerre* met, of course, but did not take much to each other. I heard from the same source I have mentioned above that the Red Prince had been chiefly struck by Sherman's unmilitary appearance, and had said: "er sieht aus wie ein Schuster"—it being certainly the fact that this scourge of the Confederates was, in private life, a simple, amiable specimen of the ordinary citizen of his great country, but of decidedly unprepossessing exterior. He, too, on his side, was not captivated by the victor of Vionville and Le Mans.

One of the drawbacks of life at Constantinople is the entire absence of social intercourse with the Turks of the upper-class, produced by the seclusion in which their women are kept. I remember meeting, and having some talk about this, with Mustapha Fazyl one day at a kind of fair held during Bairam at the fine Bayazid, or pigeon, mosque, so called from the myriads of these birds which whir above its slender minarets and strut about and defile its

lovely fountain court. Although Mustapha Fazyl, as a member of the reigning Egyptian family, stood on a much higher plane of civilization than the common run of Pashas, he surprised me by boldly broaching this difficult subject of the isolation of the Mussulman ladies. I must find Constantinople very dull, he said, without what was, after all, the salt of social life in other countries. I asked him, if such were his views, in which I entirely agreed, why he, and such as he, did not work at a gradual emancipation of their wives and daughters. He curtly and cynically replied—dismissing, as it were, the subject, which your genuine Mussulman thinks it unseemly even to touch upon—that there would be no trusting the women when once they were freed from their bondage. Mustapha Fazyl no doubt had in his mind such persons as the wife of one of the Turkish Ministers, whom Lady Bulwer went to see occasionally, and who, when asked what would be to her the highest form of enjoyment, replied that she could think of nothing more delightful than floating about on the Bosphorus all through a fine summer's night, provided, the poor lady innocently added in her broken French, there was: “Lune de clair et beaucoup hommes.”

The curious part of it was that the *blasé* Egyptian, who held such contemptuous views of the Moslem fair sex, was giving a charming and very attractive daughter of his own as liberal a European education as was compatible with the rules of the *harem*. My

wife had now quite recovered her strength, and in the beautiful spring weather we sometimes took rides on the breezy downs of the Ok-meïdan above Kassim Pasha. Here we one day met a Miss Albert, whose acquaintance my wife had made, I think, at the Hobarts. This pleasant, well-mannered Englishwoman was governess and companion to Mustapha Fazyl's daughter, Nazlie Hanoum, and she gave a message to my wife from her young pupil begging that she would come and see her. This led to a certain intimacy, which enabled me, through my wife's accounts, to form some idea of the strange mixture of emancipation and captivity, of civilization and barbarism, that made up the life of this Moslem Princess of eighteen. She spoke both French and English perfectly, read a good deal—mostly English novels, which had made her familiar with English life—and was a fairly good musician. One of the indulgences granted her by her father, who doted upon her, was to go out riding with Miss Albert, and for that purpose she was driven in a close brougham, with the blinds only very partially drawn, to some point on the heights outside Pera, where horses and *cavasses* were waiting for her, and she had her gallop in the best-fitting of London riding-habits. I got to know her very well by sight, and, from what she told my wife, she too was familiar with the appearance of most of the younger *chers collègues*, and had heard a great deal about them and their doings. When we left Constantinople

she sent us some photographs of herself, *en amazone* and in full evening dress, signed Nazlie, which I have carefully preserved throughout my peregrinations. I have also kept a little farewell note to my wife, on our departure, that might have been written by any English girl. Poor Princess Nazlie was not long after married to Khalil Bey,¹ who was very wealthy but a notorious gambler, celebrated for his heavy losses at the Cercle de la Rue Royale, where he was said to have staked some fabulous sum on a single card at baccarat. He did not survive the marriage long, and she was well rid of this *Turc du boulevard*, as Prince Gortchacow used to call him with withering scorn. Of late years she has settled at Cairo, where she has, I believe, a pleasant European *salon*, having long thrown off the Oriental trammels of her youth.

By the middle of May the Elliots had returned from England, and it became a question with us whether we should go to the trouble and expense of a move to summer quarters on the Bosphorus. Having fair prospects of early promotion, I decided to apply for leave and spend the hottest time of the year in Switzerland, returning to my post in September if no change came to me before then. I was in many ways unwilling to leave Constantinople. I had acquired a great interest in the work, there being something fascinating in watching the rapid decay of a once formidable power and endeavouring to check its progress, although, at this time already,

¹ Khalil Bey had been at one time Minister for Foreign Affairs.

I was personally convinced of the hopelessness of bolstering up the Turk as we had been doing ever since the days of the great Eltchi. It was impossible to shut one's eyes to the general disorganisation existing, while the extravagance of the Court¹ and the corruption obtaining in high places exceeded even the habitual Eastern standard. The reports which reached the different Embassies and Legations from the provinces at the same time equally told the old tale of oppression and misgovernment, and furthermore revealed disquieting symptoms of a growing fanatical spirit of hostility to all Christians and foreigners. Even in Constantinople such signs were not wanting, and the attitude of the soldiery had given rise to serious official remonstrances. I wrote a final report in this sense, expressing more particularly my belief that friendly, but strong and disinterested, pressure, such as we alone could exercise, was indispensable if these evils were to be arrested and prevented from spreading farther. What I then wrote, I honestly thought, and still believe, to be true, and the course of events in the last thirty years in the now sadly mutilated Empire confirms, I venture to think, my views. The veteran

¹ The prodigality of successive Sultans in building great palaces, doomed to be deserted at every change of reign, was alone a very great evil. Whilst I was at Constantinople, Abdul Medjid's palace of Dolma Bagtchê was about to be abandoned by his successor for his own erection of Tchiragan, built at such prodigious expense that the doors alone in the State rooms were said to have cost £1000 apiece. Since then these and other sumptuous buildings have been given up for the fortress-kiosk of Yildiz.

Hammond, then Permanent Under-Secretary, spoke approvingly to me about my despatch on my return to England. Fortunately our Embassy was in thoroughly capable hands, and if any one could cope effectively with foreign intrigue, and retard the ill effects of native misrule, it was the Ambassador who had accomplished the task, begun by Lord Lyons during the short time he held the appointment, of entirely restoring our ancient authority and prestige with the Porte which, at one time, had fallen to a very low point. Sir Henry Elliot's tenure of the Embassy at Constantinople will remain, if I may permit myself to say so, one of the most creditable pages of our modern diplomatic history.

We left Constantinople for Marseilles on the 30th of May. Among other things, I greatly regretted leaving the view we had from our windows, across the Golden Horn to the wonderful city beyond, with the superb line of its mosques and minarets breaking the horizon; a prospect never to be forgotten by those who have noted its incomparable beauty day by day. I looked back, too, with regret, to delightful rides along the splendid shattered walls, to excursions to Eyoub and the sweet waters of Europe and Asia, and pleasant junketings at many a lovely spot on the shores of the Bosphorus. I scarcely thought then that I should revisit these scenes no more, and was taking leave for good of the grandest site of Empire ever pitched upon by man—then as now in unworthy hands—the ultimate fate of which

remains the most insoluble of problems for the state-craft of Europe.

We spent the entire summer in Switzerland, and settled the children with their aunt, Countess Joannini, at a place called Kersatz, in the neighbourhood of Berne. Our old friend the Berne doctor, Demme, having advised us both to try the effects of a cold-water cure, we went for several weeks to the hydropathic establishment at Albisbrunn, on the slopes of the Albis between the Lakes of Zurich and Zug, a very rough, primitive place, where we were fortunate in meeting an agreeable Genevese patrician family of the name of Sarrasin, and my old Vienna acquaintance, the Marquis Corio, now, by his marriage with a Neapolitan heiress, become Prince Castelcicala. Corio was one of the few Lombards who remained faithful to Austria and to the Emperor Maximilian, whose representative he afterwards was at Brussels. From him I learned some interesting particulars regarding the bad faith, not to say treachery, of Bazaine, and the magnanimous way in which the unfortunate Emperor had practically sacrificed himself for others in refusing to accept from the enemy a safe-conduct that did not include the generals who had stood by him to the last. The execution of Maximilian has always appeared to me unjustifiable, and little short of murder in cold blood ; and I cannot quite forgive the late Lord Derby for maintaining, in an argument I once had with him on the subject, that the Emperor had deserved his fate.

From Albisbrunn we went on a fortnight's visit to my sister and Gaston de la Rochefoucauld, now comfortably installed in their villa at Baden-Baden, which they have since exchanged for a still more charming home at Biarritz. We left them in July for St. Moritz in the Engadine, where we found a number of pleasant people, among whom were Lord Chelsea, now Lord Cadogan, my old London friend, Marquis d'Azeglio, Mrs. Bischoffsheim, the Mahons and Loyd-Lindsays.¹ We made great friends with the two last-named couples, and from Loyd-Lindsay and his wife I was soon to experience most considerate kindness. During our stay at St. Moritz I had some correspondence with Lord Granville's private secretary, Wetherell, about an offer made me of the Chargéship and Consulate-General in Chile. Hitherto the promotion expected by, and given to, Secretaries of Embassy had been to the minor Legations in Europe, and I hesitated to accept this distant—not to say inferior, and diplomatically uninteresting—post. Three years before I had already refused the Chargéship in Venezuela offered me by Lord Clarendon, and situated as we now were with a family of very young children, we naturally demurred to such exile as Chile. I therefore asked to be allowed to decline the proffered promotion. When, after a time, I was induced to accept it, some of my friends in the service were, in

¹ Afterwards Lord and Lady Stanhope and Lord and Lady Wantage.

fact, inclined to blame me for thus creating an undesirable precedent.

Our six weeks' stay at the Hôtel Badrutt—a very simple, unpretending establishment compared to what it has since grown into—came to an end on the 30th of August, and, after a short halt at Berne, where we picked up our small folk, we went on to Geneva and the Beau Rivage at Ouchy, pending our return to Constantinople. Meanwhile I received a friendly hint or two from England to the effect that I might do well to reconsider my decision about Chile, the result being that on the 17th of October Lord Granville wrote me word that he understood the appointment would be agreeable to me, and he had accordingly submitted my name for it to the Queen. He added that when he had first made the offer to me he had done so "without any notion of shelving me." The die was now cast, but I cannot forget how upset was my dear little wife at the prospect of so great a banishment. She felt, however, as I did, that, having but slight political or family backing or interest, I could not afford to risk damaging my prospects in the service by holding out any longer.

We started for England, stopping on our way a day or two in Paris, where, on going to the Embassy, I was received by Lionel West (who himself had just been appointed Envoy at Buenos Ayres) and the rest of the Chancery with a chorus of congratulations, which I received rather coolly, until I was

told that I had been gazetted as Minister Resident at Santiago. This was a very kind surprise on the part of Lord Granville, for I was the first person on whom that rank was conferred at any of our lesser South American posts, and the diplomatic pill I had to swallow being thus gracefully gilded, I could no longer reasonably complain. We went on to Love's Hotel in Albemarle Street on the 7th of November, and at once set to work preparing for our distant destination.

I have now reached the end of my narrative, and, with it, the saddest part of my recollections, over which I will not linger. Yet—looking back through the thick veil of sorrow that obscures what my memory has retained of that grievous time—the perfect devotion, the engaging qualities, and sunny grace of her I was so soon to lose, are so present to my mind that I cannot but put down some slight record of those last few weeks. I see now more clearly perhaps than I did then, how conscious were others of her infinite charm. Lord Granville, with whom we dined one night, spoke to me afterwards of the great impression she had made on those who had then met her for the first time, and at Lockinge, where we stayed with the Loyd-Lindsays, she won all hearts by her brightness, and became the life and soul of the party, showing, too, great cleverness in some charades we acted there, and carrying away even the sedate old Lord Overstone. I still have by me a copy of verses he wrote for her on that occasion.

On our return to London we changed our quarters to Hallam's Hotel, a few doors from where we had been staying before. She was then in unusually good health, but was seized in the Christmas week by what seemed at first to be violent toothache, but soon turned into most acute neuralgia in the head, and made her take to her bed. I sent for Oscar Clayton, and the second or third day, which happened to be Christmas Day, he prescribed an opiate which at last relieved her suffering and produced some sleep —she had had no real rest for some nights. In the evening she felt a good deal better and inclined to sleep, and begged me to go and dine at the St. James's Club, where I had agreed to meet Edmond de Polignac. Immediately after dinner an urgent message summoned me home at once, to find that soon after my departure she had fallen into a comatose state, from which it was impossible to rouse her. Sir William Jenner was sent for in vain, and in this unconscious condition she passed away in her twenty-fifth year, at that saddest and most fatal of hours, the first break of day. It was, said the doctors, an acute case of congenital meningitis — but, in such cases, what will not doctors say?

The greatest sympathy and kindness were shown me by the few friends I had then in London. The Archibald Balfours insisted on my going to stay with them in Lowndes Square, and shortly

afterwards I was induced by the Loyd-Lindsays to come to them at Overstone for some time. Meanwhile my brother and his wife joined me from Nice, and persuaded me to take my children down there until it was finally settled in spring whether I should, or should not go, out to my post at the Antipodes. In February 1873 I was on my way south, and remained at Nice until the first days in May, and here, in the soothing, quiet surroundings made for me by the kindest of people, and with the object of turning my thoughts from an ever-present sorrow, I first set pen to these lengthy reminiscences of a varied past. When I left Nice, the early May roses in the cemetery that surrounds the pretty English church—where rest Arabin and my eldest brother Cavendish—were in richest bloom; the air was full of the scent of lilac; the whole place was a tangled thicket of flowers; peace and sunlight and brightness were all around. I thought of a northern grave where the snow had lain thick a few weeks before, and wished I could have brought the precious dead here, where the “eye of heaven” is so seldom “dimmed,” and the earth so lovingly tends those we commit to her keeping. . . .

But *sursum corda!* I was to live on many years after this, and to know, with deep thankfulness, the great blessings that were still reserved to me.

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